

BYZANTINA KEIMENA KAI MEΛETAI

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THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONTROVERSY BETWEEN
THE KINGDOM OF NICAEA AND THE PRINCIPALITY
OF EPIROS (1217 - 1233)

by
APOSTOLOS D. KARPOZILOS



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INTRODUCTION

After 1204 the political and ecclesiastical organization of the Byzantine East was severely affected by the fall of Constantinople. Subsequent to a treaty between the Venetians and the crusaders, in March 1204, the territories of the Byzantine Empire were arbitrarily partitioned into numerous Latin kingdoms and principalities. However, the Greek spirit was not subdued completely by this disintegration. On the contrary, it only served to accentuate the old religious and cultural barriers which had heretofore separated the Greek East from the Latin West.

Unable to live under the Latin rule and unreconciled to the new system, many of the Byzantine nobles fled to unoccupied territories where they developed a new political life which preserved the continuity of the Byzantine tradition. Thus, besides the Latin ones, on both sides of the Aegean independent Greek principalities emerged. Their *raison d'être* was the spanning of the continuum until the liberation of the imperial city of Constantinople.

Thus, in Bithynia of Asia Minor, Theodore Lascaris, a son-in-law of Alexios III Angelos, established the Kingdom of Nicaea, and in western Greece the principality of Epiros, which included Epiros, Acarnania and Aetolia, was founded by a cousin of the Emperors Isaac II and Alexios III.

Theodore Lascaris consolidated his rule in Bithynia with the city of Nicaea as the center of a new Byzantine state. He assumed the imperial office and succeeded in making Nicaea the successor domicile of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Thus, the political and ecclesiastical traditions, as personified by the Emperor, were once more restored. As *basileus* and *autocrator*, Theodore claimed title to the Byzantine throne. As successor-in-title, especially as he was supported by the ecumenical patriarch, he openly opposed both the Latin Emperor and Patriarch of Constantinople as usurpers.

The principality of Epiros founded by Michael Angelos extended from Dyrrachium to Naupactos with the city of Arta as its

political and cultural center. In 1224, Epiros embarked on a campaign of territorial expansion. The same year, Thessalonica, the second most important city of the former Byzantine Empire, fell to the armies of Theodore Angelos. Epiros now extended from the Adriatic to the Aegean and from Dyrrachium to the Gulf of Corinth. Theodore Angelos was then proclaimed *basileus* and *autocrator*, in open defiance of the claims to imperial power of the Lascarids of Nicaea. To the dismay of the Nicene rulers, the ceremony of his coronation was performed in Thessalonica by Demetrios Chomatianos, the autocephalous Archbishop of Achrida.

The conflict between Nicaea and Epiros was now inevitable. However, providence spared them the price of fratricidal bloodshed for the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople, standing between them as buffer state, eliminated the possibility of a direct armed confrontation. Since resort to arms could not decisively solve their dynastic dispute, the court intellectuals and the hierarchy of the Church took up the task of defending the claims to the Byzantine throne of their respective rulers. Thus, they delved into a variety of controversial issues ranging from the patriarch's spiritual authority over the Helladic provinces to who had the prerogative of anointing the Emperor.

Although they were in communion with the Nicene-based Patriarch, the Epirote clergy insisted that they would no longer accept or recognize any episcopal appointments for Epiros nominated by the Patriarchal Synod. The episcopal appointments for Epiros, they said, would hereafter be nominated and ratified by the Synod of the Epirote Church. *Rebus sic stantibus*, this innovation in no way violated the patriarchal prerogative.

The controversy between the two hierarchies continued as long as the principality of Epiros was in control of the political situation in the Balkans. However, with the rise to power of the Bulgarian Kingdom, Epiros rapidly declined never to rise to prominence again. As a result of their defeat, the Angeloi were compelled to change their policy towards Nicaea, acknowledging the sovereignty of the Lascarids as well as the spiritual authority of the Nicene-based Patriarch.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Acropolites, a contemporary court historian, is the main source of the political history of the Kingdom of Nicaea for the first part of the thirteenth century. An ardent supporter of the Lascarids, he wrote the *Χρονική Συγγραφή* which covers the period 1203 - 1261¹. In this biased account, Epiros is described as a state led by treacherous opportunists who did not recognize the legitimate heirs to the Byzantine throne. This view was adopted by subsequent Byzantine historians and was even accepted by modern scholars. The discovery of other contemporary sources led to the rectification of this conception.

Through these sources, the history of the origin and the expansion of the principality of Epiros can now be studied objectively and systematically. They consist of synodal acts and correspondence pertaining to the domestic organization of the Church of Epiros and to the relations with the patriarch and the court of the Lascarids. They are, therefore, of primary importance for assessing the Epirote claims. As Acropolites limited himself in his history to only adverse criticism they, on the contrary, elucidate the role of the hierarchy in the political antagonism between Nicaea and Epiros.

The corpus of these documents is contained in the *Codex Petropolitanus* 250 and 251 of Isaac Mesopotamites. Vasiljevski was the first to bring these to light². Following this example, A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus continued the publication of the manuscripts of Isaac Mesopotamites in a variety of scholarly works focusing on the relations of Apocaucos with the other hierarchs

1. George Acropolites, *Opera* I, ed. August Heisenberg, (Leipzig, 1903).

2. He published twenty-nine documents from *Petropolitanus* 250 which contain the major part of the correspondence of John Apocaucos, Metropolitan of Naupactos, with Theodore Angelos and the Patriarchate of Constantinople: V.G. Vasiljevski, «Epirotica saeculi XIII», in *Vizantiiski Vremennik*, III (1896), 233-299.

of the Epirote Synod³. On the basis of another Codex⁴, he also published a list of letters and synodal acts by Apocaukos.⁵

Another important source for this study is the erudite Metropolitan of Athens, Michael Choniates. His extensive correspondence with the political and ecclesiastical leadership of Nicaea and Epiros, especially with Apocaukos and Bardanes, has been researched by Spyridon Lampros⁶.

George Bardanes, Metropolitan of Corfu and a protégé of Choniates, after the retirement of Apocaukos, became an influential figure actively involved in the ecclesiastical dispute with Nicaea. The correspondence of Bardanes has been appended in the study of A. Mustoxides, *Delle Cose Corciresi*⁷.

During this period, the leadership of the Epirote Synod passed to the hands of Demetrios Chomatianos, Archbishop of Achrida, who had distinguished himself as a competent canonist. His canonical works together with some of his correspondence were published by Cardinal Pitra⁸. An ambitious ecclesiastic, he readily espoused the political and ecclesiastical policies of the Ange-
loi. In line with their policy, he identified the see of Achrida with Justiniana Prima in order to counterattack the claims of the Patriarch of Constantinople who was then residing in Nicaea.

The Epirote triad, Apocaukos, Bardanes and Chomatianos, was successfully challenged by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Germanos II. His correspondence with them was published by

3. Among those, the most notable were, the learned Demetrios Chomatianos, Archbishop of Achrida, George Bardanes, Metropolitan of Corfu and Michael Choniates, Metropolitan of Athens: A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, «Συμβολή εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀχρίδος», in *Sbornik Statei V.I. Lamanskomu*, (Petersburg, 1907), 227-250; «Κερκυραϊκά», *Vizantiiski Vremennik* XIII (1906), 334-351.

4. *Hierosolymitanus* 276.

5. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, I (Petersburg, 1891), p. 338ff. Also, S. Petrides, «Jean Apocaukos, lettres et autres documents inédits», *Bulletin de l'Institut archeologique Russe à Constantinople*, XIV (1909), 1-32.

6. Spyridon Lampros, *Μιχαὴλ Ἀχομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ Σωζόμενα*, (Athens, 1880).

7. A. Mustoxides, *Delle Cose Corciresi*, I (Corfu, 1848).

8. Joannes B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra et classica Spicilegio Solesmensi*, VI (Paris-Rome, 1891).

Cardinal Pitra⁹ and Miklosich and Müller.¹⁰ During his patriarchate the schism of the two synods was healed and his authority in Epiros was eventually restored. Before Vasiljevski and Papadopoulos-Kerameus began their research on the history of Epiros and Nicaea, Greek scholars had already undertaken the task of writing the history of thirteenth century Byzantium. The first systematic treatment on the history of Epiros was written by Ioannes Romanos¹¹. Shortly thereafter this was followed by a more important work on the history of the Kingdom of Nicaea and the principality of Epiros, by Antonios Meliarakes¹². This book was considered a minor classic for a long time, despite the fact that subsequent research added new material on the subject. Indeed, it has not yet been superseded, though another study on the history of Nicaea was written by Alice Gardner¹³.

More recently, D.M. Nicol has written on the history of Epiros¹⁴ but contrary to expectations, this book presents bibliographical lacunae and misconceptions as has been pointed out by the Byzantinist Paul Lemerle in a critical review¹⁵. Moreover, Nicol neglected to define the office of *despotes* or to even put it into

9. *ibid.*, col. 484ff.

10. F. Miklosich et J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi*, III (Vienna, 1865).

11. Ioannes Romanos, *Περὶ τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου Ἱστορικὴ Περιγραφή*, (Corfu, 1895). In this valuable study, the author covers the history of the principality of Epiros from the time of its foundation, subsequent to the fall of Constantinople in 1204, until its final destruction in 1449.

12. Antonios Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας καὶ τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου*, (Athens, 1898).

13. Alice Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea. The Story of an Empire in Exile*, (London, 1912).

14. Donald M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, (Oxford, 1957); also «Ecclesiastical Relations between the Despotate of Epirus and the Kingdom of Nicaea», *Byzantion* XXII (1952) 207-228, which is updated in his *Despotate of Epiros*.

15. Paul Lemerle, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* LI (1958), 401-403. Nicol, for instance, shows all of a sudden Michael Angelos as an independent ruler without establishing what this independence rested on. Also, he took for granted Michael's assumption of the title of despot, which could be false, without any historical proof. As to the correspondence of Bardanes, Apocaukos and Chomatianos, Nicol ought to have examined them with greater care and detail.

chronological perspective. Stiernon¹⁶ and Ferjančić¹⁷ have convincingly shown that it is inaccurate to speak of a despotate of Epiros. Michael Angelos never used the title of despot and therefore he cannot have technically established a «despotate».

In the light of the above, the claims to imperial power of the Angeloi are reexamined in this study *de novo*, especially as they reflect the ecclesiastical controversy between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the principality of Epiros.

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF NICAIA REEXAMINED

The Byzantine historian Nicetas Choniates and the Metropolitan of Ephesos Nicholas Mesarites, two Greek eyewitnesses, described the sack of Constantinople by the crusaders on April 13, 1204. Mesarites, in the funeral oration of his brother John, recalled the inhumanity of the crusaders who «shed human blood on the sacred altars where the lamb of God was offered daily for the salvation of the world»¹. Nicetas Choniates wrote that even the churches where the defenseless sought refuge were not spared². For three days the destruction of priceless treasures, the pillage and the massacre went on.

During the last days of the assault uncertainty, fear and agony had completely paralyzed the remaining defenders of the City. In the midst of the turmoil, the Emperor Alexios V attempted to rally the disorganized army and the people in a last effort to repulse the Latins. When this proved to be in vain, on the eve

1. August Heisenberg, ed., «Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des Lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion I. Der Epitaphios des Nikolaos Mesarites auf seinen Bruder Johannes», *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse* (1922), 5 Abh., 46, 29 - 31. Hereafter cited as *Neue Quellen*, I. Heisenberg published in three parts several works of Nicholas Mesarites under the general title, «Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des Lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion».

II. «Die Unionsverhandlungen von 30 August 1206. Patriarchenwahl und Kaiserkrönung in Nikaia 1208», (1923), 2 Abh., hereafter cited as *Neue Quellen* II.

III. «Der Bericht des Nikolaos Mesarites über die politischen und kirchlichen Ereignisse des Jahres 1214», (1923), 3 Abh., hereafter cited as *Neue Quellen* III.

2. Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker, (Bonn, 1835), 760 - 761.

16. Lucien Stiernon, «Les origines du despotat d'Épire», *Revue des Études Byzantines*, XVII (1959), 90 - 126.

17. Božidar Ferjančić, *Despota u Vizantiji i južnoslovenskim zemljama*, (Belgrade, 1960).

of April 13, 1204, Alexios V fled Constantinople joining his father-in-law Alexios III in exile³.

As a new ruler was needed to rally the Byzantine forces in this last attempt to rescue the collapsing Empire, on the eve of the fall of Constantinople, remnants of the nobility and the higher clergy assembled in St. Sophia to elect a new Emperor. Nicetas Choniates is the only historian to give us a full account of this event⁴. He wrote that the candidates were Doucas and Lascaris. A historical uncertainty has prevailed as to their full identity since Nicetas Choniates did not disclose their Christian names. It has been suggested that this Lascaris was Theodore the subsequent founder of the Kingdom of Nicaea⁵. However, as this has not been heretofore documented, there has been a reluctance to accept this supposition. On the contrary, the scholarly research of M. A. Andreeva⁶ and B. Sinogowitz⁷ has recently convinced Byzantinists⁸ that the candidate to the throne was not Theodore Lascaris but his brother Constantine. According to Nicetas Choniates, the assembly in St. Sophia elected Lascaris and evidently

3. *ibid.*, p. 755, 13-21; George Acropolites, *Opera* I, ed. August Heisenberg, (Leipzig, 1903), p. 9, 5, 9-11.

4. Nic. Chon., p. 755, 22-756, 13.

5. Ernst Gerland, *Geschichte des Lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel*, I (Homburg v.d. Höhe, 1905), p. 35; Antonios Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας*, (Athens, 1898), p. 6; Alice Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, (London, 1912), p. 55ff.

6. M.A. Andreeva, *Očerki po kulture vizantijskogo dvora v XIII V.*, (Prague, 1927), pp. 5-6; *Byzantinoslavica* IV (1932), 178.

7. B. Sinogowitz, 'Über das Byzantinische Kaisertum nach dem vier-ten Kreuzzuge (1204-1205)', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, VL (1952), 345-356, esp., 353-356.

8. George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, transl. by J. Hussey, (Oxford, 1969), p. 428, n. 2; Charles M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West, 1180-1204*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968), p. 258; Franz Dölger, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXII (1932), 411; *Deutsche Literatur Zeitung*, LXXXIV (1953), 598.

Ostrogorsky, however, does not accept the theory that Constantine Lascaris exercised the imperial office in Nicaea during the year 1204-1205: *loc. cit.* For a similar view, J. Papadrianos, 'Da li je Konstantin Laskaris bio vizantijski car?' in *Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* IX (1966), 217-222. For a critique of Sinogowitz's thesis A. Christophilopoulou, 'Εκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Αυτοκράτορος', *Πραγματεῖαι τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν* XXII (1956), 170-172.

he considers him famous enough not to mention his first name. Surprisingly enough, all other contemporaneous sources are silent on the matter.

The driving necessity for the election of an Emperor and the special assembly convened towards this end, make it unlikely for the documenting narrator not to reveal their full identity. As this was not disclosed, the obvious answer is that he was known well enough to be identified by his last name alone.

Nicetas Choniates stated that the candidates to the throne were: «νεανιῶν ξυνωρίς νηφαλίων τε καὶ ἀρίστων τῇ κατὰ πόλεμον δεξιότητι, (ὁ Δούκας οὗτοι καὶ ὁ Λάσκαρις), ἀμφοῖν δ' ἡ κλήσις ὁμώνυμος τῷ ἀρχηγῷ τῆς πίστεως βασιλεῖ...»⁹ Sinogowitz interpreted the last clause: «(ὁ Δούκας οὗτοι καὶ ὁ Λάσκαρις), ἀμφοῖν δ' ἡ κλήσις ὁμώνυμος τῷ ἀρχηγῷ τῆς πίστεως βασιλεῖ,» as referring to Constantine the Great, the defender of the Christian faith¹⁰. Consequently, both Doucas and Lascaris must have been called Constantine since both of their Christian names were similar to the head of the Christian Church. A demotic version of this passage supports this view¹¹.

In addition, Sinogowitz maintained that Constantine following the fall of Constantinople, established his authority in Bithynia of Asia Minor where he ruled as an Emperor until his death in 1205. As this supposition could not be based upon any historical evidence, Sinogowitz simply suggested that Constantine stayed with his brother Theodore during this period (1204 - 1205) for which Theodore Lascaris' activities are documented¹². However, these same sources make no reference to Constantine as such and he therefore cannot be placed in time and in title on their basis¹³.

9. Nic. Chon., p. 755, 22-756, 3.

10. Sinogowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 352; M.A. Andreeva, *loc. cit.*

11. *Σύνοψις Χρονική*, ed. Constantine Sathas, *Bibliotheca Medii Aevi*, (Venice, 1894), VII, p. 448, 10-13.

12. Sinogowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 354 cited Acr. p. 10, 6. 26 and p. 11, 6. 2 but both passages refer to Theodore and not to his brother Constantine Lascaris.

13. Geoffroy de Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, Edmond Faral ed., (Paris, 1938-1939), II, p. 130, mentions Constantine as «one of the finest Greeks in Romania» fighting under Theodore Lascaris' command. Acr. p. 11, 7. 20-12, 7. 3; Nic. Chon., p. 798, 5ff; Vill., II, 132ff mention that Constantine's army was defeated by superior Latin forces near Adramyttion

Actually, the election of the two candidates did not take place through a formal proclamation by the senate, the army and the people as in the customary form, but was solved as if it was a private matter, by drawing lots¹⁴. Choniates explicitly stated that there was no proclamation and no investiture with the *σύμβολα τῆς βασιλείας*. How then could Constantine have ruled as an Emperor until 1205? Constantine could have ruled till 1205 only without legal title to the throne. But this has not been documented.

Be that as it may, the sources say that Theodore Lascaris, after the fall of Constantinople, crossed the Bosphoros to Asia Minor where he consolidated his authority around Bithynia. Emerging victorious from wars waged against the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople and the Greek principalities of Sampsum and Trebizond¹⁵, in the spring of 1205, Theodore was proclaimed *basileus* of the Greeks,^{15a} an event that signified his victory over his rivals and the consolidation of his authority in western Asia Minor. His rise to imperial power¹⁶ became even more effective when

on March 19, 1205. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 56 and Sinogowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-356 maintain that Constantine Lascaris soon after the battle of Adramyttion died and was succeeded by his brother Theodore. However, we find Constantine years later still fighting on the side of his brother Theodore against the Latins this time defending the city of Lentiana, which finally fell to the armies of Henry of Flanders. The sources suggest that the battle was fought after the battle of Louparcos (October, 15, 1211), where Henry defeated Theodore Lascaris. Acr. p. 28, 16. 12ff. After the fall of Lentiana, Henry caught many prisoners but released Constantine Lascaris and two other noblemen, Dermocaites and Andronicos Palaeologos; Acr. p. 29, 16. 3-11: «... οὐδεις ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπολέσεται· εἰ μὴ μόνος ὁ τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτάδελφος». Sinogowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 356, n. 1, however, maintained that this brother of Theodore Lascaris was not Constantine but another of his five brothers.

14. Nic. Chon., p. 756, 10. Christophilopoulou, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.

15. Sathas, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 97-107 and 107-129. Nicetas Choniates mentions warfare against the Latins p. 115, 10, the Trapezuntine rulers David and Alexios Comnenos 115, 15 and Manuel Maurozomes, the ruler of Sampsum, p. 116, 19-117, 7. Choniates' two orations: «Σελέντιον γραφὴν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀναγνωσθῆναι ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Λάσκαρη κυροῦ Θεοδώρου» and «Λόγος ἐκδοθεὶς ἐπὶ τῷ ἀναγνωσθῆναι εἰς τὸν Λάσκαριν κύρ Θεόδωρον», hereafter cited as *Selention* and *Oration* are of great importance for the early history of the Nicene Kingdom.

15a. Sinogowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-351, has convincingly established Theodore's proclamation in the Spring of 1205. Acropolites has dated both the proclamation and the coronation in 1206, *op. cit.*, p. 11. 5-20.

16. Nic. Chon., p. 827, 21: «τὸ ἐρυθρὸν πέδιλον ὑποδύεται καὶ βασιλεὺς

the Orthodox leadership of Constantinople decided to recognize him as *basileus* of the Greeks. Being constantly urged by the Latins to accept the primacy of the Pope, the Orthodox clergy of Constantinople was in desperate need of political and spiritual support which only the Byzantine Emperor and his patriarch could provide¹⁷.

Intimidated and coerced by the Latins to enter into negotiations to discuss the problem of the Union of the Churches, the Orthodox found themselves in a difficult situation, especially after the news of the patriarch's death reached Constantinople¹⁸. Des-

Ῥωμαίων ὑφ' ὧν τῶν ἐσθίων ἀναγορεύεται πόλεων...»

Nic. Chon., *Selention*, p. 105, 24; *Oration*, p. 113, 17; Acr., p. 11, 7. 6-9: «ἐπεὶ συνδρομὴ γέγονε κατὰ Νίκαιαν ἀπὸ περιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ τῶν λογάδων τῆς ἐκκλησίας, σκέψις τούτοις ἐγένετο ὅπως βασιλεὺς φημισθῇ ὁ δεσπότης Θεόδωρος». Acropolites made no distinction between the time of Theodore's proclamation to the throne and his coronation. Actually, before his proclamation in 1205, Theodore had ruled as despot instead of his father-in-law Alexios III. Acr., p. 10, 6. 17 and p. 25, 11.6.1.

17. R. Janin, «Au lendemain de la conquête de Constantinople», *Échos d'Orient*, XXXII (1933), 11-18. W. Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, (Berlin, 1903), p. 181; *Neue Quellen*, I, p. 60ff.

18. Migne, PG 147:464D: The Patriarch John X Camateros died in exile in Adrianople between April and May of 1206; Nic. Chon., p. 837, 2-5.

Theodore Lascaris repeatedly invited him to Nicaea but the patriarch declined the invitation perhaps because he was a supporter of Alexios III and did not wish to sanction Theodore's claims to the Byzantine throne. Besides there is reason to believe that he was related to the Empress Euphrosyne, Alexios' wife, who was a member of the Camateros family: Nic. Chon., p. 641, 3-6.

Acr., p. 11, 7.10-15: «ὁ γὰρ Καματηρὸς Ἰωάννης, δὲ τὸν πατριαρχικὸν ἐκίσμεναι θρόνον... περὶ τὸ Διδυμότειχον ἀπῆρε κἀκεῖσε τὰς διατριβάς ἐπεποίητο καὶ διαμνησθεὶς παρὰ τε τοῦ Λασκάριος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπηνήνατο τὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀφίξιν, ἐγγραφὸν τὴν παραίτησιν ποιησάμενος».

Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, p. 40; Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 67, have misunderstood this passage suggesting that the patriarch rejected Theodore's invitation and sent his written resignation. However, the patriarch's answer should be understood in connection with the invitation that was extended to him by Theodore and not in terms of a formal abdication from the patriarchal office. In fact, Camateros was the legitimate patriarch of the Greeks until the time of his death. This is supported by the statements of the Greek clergy of Constantinople during the union negotiations with the Latins. *Neue Quellen*, I, p. 53, 11-15: «ὅτι ταῖς ἀποστολικαῖς καὶ κανονικαῖς ἐπόμενοι παραδόσεσιν οὔτε ἐτέρου ἀναφορὰν ἐποιησάμεθα μέχρις ἂν ἐκεῖνος ἔζη (ὁ Καματηρὸς), οὔτε μετὰ θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐτέρου τινὸς ἀναφορὰν ποιῆσαι δυνάμεθα».

pite their urgent requests to be allowed to elect a new patriarch, the Latins refused such an election to take place mainly because the problem of the Union was not settled. Having no other alternative, the Orthodox synod of Constantinople turned to Theodore Lascaris who at the time was the only one with sufficient authority to convene a synod for the election of a new patriarch.

The sources suggest that the proclamation of Theodore in the spring of 1205 was not immediately recognized by the Greek cities of Asia Minor¹⁹. Consequently, his claims to the Byzantine throne were not yet firmly secured but still in need of further support. If he would promptly comply with the request of the Constantinopolitan clergy, Theodore knew that he could count on the support of a large segment of the Orthodox Church and also on the patriarch who would most likely be a candidate of his own choice as the election largely depended on him. On the other hand, the election of a new patriarch would benefit the Orthodox Church and at the same time the clergy of Constantinople which desired to be relieved from the burden of handling the union negotiations with the Latins.

The leading spokesmen of the Orthodox clergy during the negotiations were the brothers Nicholas and John Mesarites, strong opponents of the Union and advocates of an independent Orthodox Church governed by a Greek Patriarch under the Latin King of the City²⁰. After two years of strenuous efforts and

19. Nic. Chon., *Oration*, p. 123, 6-29: Choniates mentions that, though the people of Plusias in Asia Minor were reluctant to recognize Theodore's authority, they were later convinced to accept him as their legitimate ruler. Acr. p. 10. 6.21-26: Even the people of Nicaea rejected Theodore Lascaris, who out of necessity begged them to at least accept his wife.

Both the Plusians and the Nicenes, most likely, were predisposed against Theodore because they still considered Alexios III as the legitimate Byzantine Emperor. Alexios III had abdicated in 1203 but never ceased to regard himself as the rightful Emperor. After a period of wanderings in the mainland of Greece, he finally found refuge in the court of Ghijateddin Kaikhosrev, the Sultan of Iconium whom he joined in war against Theodore Lascaris: Acr., p. 12.8.22 and 17, 10.20-25. In 1210, at a battle near Antioch of the Maeander, Theodore defeated the Sultan's army taking Alexios III into captivity. Alexios ended his life in the monastery of Yakinthos in Nicaea: P. Wittek, «Von der byzantinischen zur türkischen Toponymie», *Byzantion*, X (1936), 26, 29ff; Gerland, *op. cit.*, p. 212; Nicephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Shopen and I. Bekker, (Bonn, 1830), I, p. 18ff.

20. *Neue Quellen*, I, p. 60ff; *Neue Quellen*, II, p. 5 and esp., 18, 6-17.

fruitless negotiations, the Greek clergy decided to terminate their talks with the Latin representatives and turn to Theodore Lascaris for help. Nicholas Mesarites who became the leading spokesman of the Greeks after his brother's death, was entrusted with the task of writing and delivering personally three letters of the Orthodox hierarchy to Theodore Lascaris and his immediate family²¹. Mesarites praised Theodore's military achievements and his divinely appointed rule, because as a true Byzantine Emperor, «he brought together the scattered people of Constantinople under his wings like a magnificent bird, protecting them from the poisonous and evil attacks of the Latins»²². Knowing his clemency, they addressed themselves to their mighty and pious Emperor (*basileus*)²³ beseeching him to permit the holy hierarchy of the East to elect a new patriarch for the See of Constantinople in accordance with the sacred and divine canons and the customs of the

The negotiations between the representatives of the Orthodox Church and the Latin delegation, headed by Cardinal Benedict, took place in Constantinople at the beginning of October, 1206. The Greeks argued that the differences in language, customs and above all, canon law, prevented them from accepting a Latin Patriarch. The Cardinal called them: «disobedient, unyielding, presumptuous and proud to realize what was beneficial for them». *Neue Quellen*, I, p. 62, 6-8; p. 52, 19; 53, 23.

The Greeks argued back: «If we were, as you say, inflexible, we could have gone like the rest of the people of Constantinople to the land of the Emperor (*basileus*) Lascaris Theodore the Comnenos and to that of kyr David and to the lands of the barbarians who share our own faith, and even to the land of the Turks». p. 62, 12-18.

The Greek clergy, seeing that their demands for a Greek Patriarch were rejected, decided to send a petition to Pope Innocent III asking permission to elect a Greek Patriarch who would share their language and traditions. They added, «it would not be at all fair for the Greeks to confess secrets to a foreign-speaking patriarch through an interpreter, even if they would be in complete communion». Migne, PG 140: 296D-297A.

21. *Neue Quellen*, II, pp. 25-35.

22. *ibid.*, p. 26, 11-13.

23. The clergy of Constantinople addressed Theodore Lascaris as *basileus* and *autocrator* and his wife as *augusta*, attributing to them the traditional titles of the Byzantine rulers: 25, 14: «βασιλέα Ρωμαίων»; «μεγαλειότης βασιλεῦ». 28, 15: «τῷ κρατίστῳ... βασιλεῖ...»; «ὡς <Κύριος> καὶ εἶη σε σκέπων ὁ παντοκράτωρ τὸν αὐτοκράτορα». 29, 28. Heisenberg rejected this view maintaining that only after his coronation Theodore was recognized as Emperor, *Neue Quellen*, II, p. 7. For an opposite view, cf. Christophilopoulou, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

Orthodox Church²⁴. The other two letters were written in the same style asking Theodore's wife and son to use their influence on their behalf.

Theodore Lascaris readily pledged his support by announcing to the people of Constantinople through Mesarites that the election of the new patriarch would take place in Nicaea on the third week of Lent²⁵. He invited them to participate in the patriarch's election by sending their representatives or at least their votes²⁶. As for the date, he explained that it would be desirable for the election to take place before the Holy Week during which the patriarch prepared the holy *myron*²⁷. Theodore's interest in the preparation of the holy *myron* is understandable because it was used in imperial coronations for the anointment of the Emperor²⁸.

The holy Synod met in Nicaea and on March 20, 1208 raised to the vacant Patriarchal throne of Constantinople Michael IV Autoreianos²⁹. Accordingly, on Easter Sunday of 1208 the pa-

24. *ibid.*, p. 28, 14-17.

25. *ibid.*, p. 34, 32-35, 6.

26. *ibid.*, p. 35, 10ff: «ἄσοι μέντοι μὴ δύνανται ἐξ ὑμῶν παραγενέσθαι πρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν μου, διὰ γνωμῶν οικείων ἐνυπογράφων οὗτοι παραγενέσθωσαν». Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 68, wrongly maintained that Theodore invited the Constantinopolitan clergy «to come and witness and approve the choice of a patriarch but (not to use the right of choice)».

27. *ibid.*, p. 32, 2-6. Also, L. Petit, «Du pouvoir de consacrer le Saint Chreme», *Échos d'Orient* III (1899), 1-7; 129-142. E. Herman, «Confirmation dans l'Eglise Orientale», *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique* IV (1949), 109-128. Also, Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, (Munich, 1959), p. 63.

28. Louis Brehier, *Les Institutions de l'empire Byzantin*, (Paris, 1949), pp. 13-16, esp. 14ff.

The earliest records of this rite are found in a letter of Photios to Basil I, Minge, PG 102:765 and in Theodore Balsamon's interpretation of Canon XII of the Synod of Ancyra, Migne, PG 138:1156. Balsamon maintained that the anointment of the Emperor, like the baptism, erased those sins committed before the ceremony of the anointment even murder as in the case of Tzimisces.

W. Sickel, «Das byzantinische Krönungsrecht bis zum 10. Jahrhundert», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, VII (1898), 524, 547; O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser und Reichsidee*, (Jena, 1938), p. 29, no. 90, proposed that these references are actually figures of speech and do not allude to the rite.

29. Autoreianos' election was believed to have taken place on March 20, 1206. Nicephoros Callistos, Migne, PG 147:465A. Gerland, *op. cit.*, p.

triarh in a solemn ceremony anointed and crowned Theodore Lascaris Byzantine Emperor³⁰.

Theoretically, the anointment and coronation of Theodore had little constitutional significance because he had already received the symbols of his ruling power at the time of his proclamation in the Spring of 1205^{30a}. Also the patriarch's act of anointing and crowning him Emperor was purely religious in nature signifying the sacerdotal character of the *basileus* as the Lord's anointed and the divine origins of his *basileia*³¹.

George Ostrogorsky maintained that the rite of the Emperor's anointment by the patriarch was an innovation introduced in Byzantium during the coronation of Theodore³². His main ar-

106, n. 1; Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, p. 98; J. Pargoire, «Nicholas Mesarites, metropolite d'Ephese», *Échos d'Orient*, VII (1904), 226, suggested that the patriarch's election took place on Palm Sunday, April 15, 1207. However, the date that is most acceptable now is March 20, 1208, first proposed by Heisenberg, *Neue Quellen*, II, p. 11. Elected on the 20th, the patriarch should have been ordained and enthroned on the 25th of March, the day of the festivity of the Annunciation. V. Laurent, «La Chronologie des Patriarches de Constantinople au XIII^e s. 1208-1309», *Revue des Études Byzantines* XXVII (1969), 129-133.

30. *Neue Quellen*, II, p. 11. Heisenberg dated the anointment during the Holy Week, March 30—April 6, 1208 but it is doubtful that such a jubilant event would take place during the Holy Week. A more acceptable date would be Easter Sunday, April 6, 1208. Laurent, *op. cit.*, p. 133, n. 12.

30a. This view is supported by Christophilopoulou, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-174.

31. P. Charanis, «The Imperial Crown Modiolus and its Constitutional Significance», *Byzantion* XII (1937), 189-195, esp. 193ff; the introduction of the patriarch in the coronation ceremonies of Leo I (457-474) was a real constitutional innovation. Charanis convincingly shows that the patriarch acted in his capacity of a priest as the representative of the Church; Sickel, *op. cit.*, p. 517 and Treitinger, *op. cit.*, p. 30-31, maintain that the patriarch during the coronation ceremony, acts not as the representative of the Church but as the first citizen of the Byzantine State. Nevertheless, Treitinger observed, p. 31: «Notwendig war für jede Kaiserbestellung einzig die Übereinstimmung von Senat, Heer und Volk, sie war die einzige die juristische Basis der kaiserlichen Macht».

32. George Ostrogorsky, «Zur Kaisersalbung und Schilderhebung im spätbyzantinischen Krönungszeremoniell», *Historia*, IV (1955), 246-256, esp., 248-250; F.E. Brightman, «Byzantine Imperial Coronations», *The Journal of Theological Studies*, II (1904), 359-392, esp. 385-387.

The rite of the Emperor's anointment was not unknown in the Kingdom of Cilician Armenia. It seems that it was practiced for some time. Levon

gument rests on a study of the terms *χρίειν*, *χρίσμα* and *τὸ θεῖον τοῦ μύρου χρίσμα* as used by Nicetas Choniates, suggesting that in his historical work he used them figuratively because the rite was not yet known in the East, whereas in his later works the terms have a literal meaning since by that time the rite was already introduced in the imperial coronation of Lascaris³³. Thus, Nicetas Choniates in his *History* (p. 70. 12; 603, 7; 744. 11), supposedly used the terms figuratively but on the contrary in his *Selention* and *Oration* the same terms have a literal meaning. This interpretation of course implies that both the *Selention* and the *Oration* were written by Choniates after Theodore's anointment and coronation. Ostrogorsky suggests then that there is a chronological gap between the historical work of Nicetas Choniates and his two other treatises, for he dates the *Selention* and the *Oration* after Theodore's coronation (1208), a theory proposed first by Heisenberg³⁴. His argument however rests, we believe, on false premises. The contents of the *Oration* suggest that it was delivered earlier, most likely in 1206, on the occasion of Theodore's return from a victorious crusade, as Sinogowitz has rightly proposed³⁵. As for the *Selention*, it has been actually dated before Theodore's coronation (1208), possibly on 13 February 1206, after his proclamation to power^{35a}. That the *Selention* could not have been delivered after Theodore's coronation, (which followed the patriarch's enthronization dated on Easter Sunday 6 April 1208), is further attested by the fact that it was a speech traditionally delivered by the Emperor at the beginning of Lent officially commencing a period of religious fasting and prayer that lasted forty days³⁶. Thus Ostrogorsky's supposition and distinc-

I commenced, for instance, his reign issuing in 1099 coinage depicting his imperial anointment. Paul Z. Bedoukian, «Coinage of Cilician Armenia», *American Numismatic Society*, CIII (1962), p. 77.

33. Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

34. Heisenberg, *Neue Quellen*, II, pp. 11-12, esp. 12, n. 1.

35. Nic. Chon. *Oration*, p. 108, 21; Sinogowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-348; Christophilopoulou, *op. cit.*, p. 175. Jan-Louis Van Dieten, «Niketas Choniates Erläuterungen zu den Reden und Briefen nebst einer Biographie», in *Supplementa Byzantina*, II (Berlin, 1971), 143-155, esp. 146-152.

35a. Christophilopoulou, *op. cit.*, p. 176. Van Dieten, however, has dated the *Selention* in February 1208, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-143, esp. 141-142.

36. The *Selention* was a *κατηχητήριος λόγος* which the Emperor delivered every year at the beginning of Lent: «Νοσήσας δὲ ὁ Λέων κοιλιακὸν

tion of *χρίειν*, *χρίσμα* cannot be sufficiently substantiated³⁷. Moreover, it is doubtful that Theodore Lascaris would risk such an innovation especially when ecclesiastical *akribeia* could reinforce his claims to the Byzantine throne. Besides, was not the purpose of his letter to the clergy of Constantinople and the bishops of the East to hasten the election of the patriarch, so he could be anointed and crowned Emperor? If Theodore was indeed an innovator, it would appear that the emphasis of his letter to the clergy of Constantinople was misplaced, rendering its content with regard to the holy *myron* absurd and incomprehensible.

Surprisingly enough, the fact that both Emperor and patriarch had assumed power in exile, while their respective thrones were held in captivity, did not become a controversial issue at this time. Although the sources occasionally refer to the anomalous circumstances under which the Nicene State was founded, they fail to provide us with a well worked out justification. Understandably, the need for a capable political and ecclesiastical leadership had rendered such a consideration, at least in their view, superfluous.

Besides, the Byzantines were not confronted with the problem of dynastic rivalry — in that case, the foundation of a rival independent state would surely raise questions of precedence and legitimacy — but with a foreign invasion. Consequently, the establishment of an independent Byzantine State was a basic prerequisite for both survival and resistance.

As such, the consolidation of the Nicene State and the reorganization of the Patriarchate proved more important and pressing than the luxury of debating an issue of secondary importance³⁸. Of course, it was common knowledge that the establishment

νόσημα τοσοῦτον κατειργάσθη τὴν δύναμιν ὥς μηδὲ δυνηθῆναι διαλεχθῆναι τῇ συγκλήτῳ περὶ νηστείας τὴν συνήθη διάλεξιν, ἣ καλεῖται σελέντιον». Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitomae Historiarum*, ed. Theodore Buttner-Wobst, (Bonn, 1897), III, p. 455, 1-3. Also, Nic. Chon., *Selention*, p. 99, 18; 98, 27; 99, 3: «περιχαρῶς τοίνυν τὴν νηστείαν ὑποδεξώμεθα».

37. Nic. Chon. *Oration*, p. 114, 4: «ἄρα δὲ μετὰ τὸ φοινικοῦν πέδιλον καὶ τὴν τοῦ στέφους ἀνάδην», does not imply an ecclesiastical coronation but simply an act of proclamation.

38. Theodore Lascaris banned any discussions that could have jeopardized the unity of the Nicene State. He even forbade the discussion of theological questions. Heisenberg, *Neue Quellen*, III, p. 55.

of the Patriarchate was inconsistent and contrary to canon law³⁹. Yet, its transfer there, was only temporary, (until their return to Constantinople), having been necessitated by the circumstances⁴⁰. As for Theodore's ascent to *imperium*, though admittedly irregular, he was proclaimed and crowned in exile—was at the same time an act of divine providence⁴¹. Was he not instrumental in bringing under his rule the dispersed and persecuted citizens of the fallen Empire? On account of him, the Empire rose from the ruins and its unity and faith were again safeguarded. And above all, the hope of the Empire's final restoration at last had begun to materialize because Romania was divinely rescued from the danger of complete annihilation⁴². These views, at first current only among the Greeks of western Asia Minor⁴³ and Constantinople,

39. The canons of the Church prohibited bishops to occupy more than one see. G. Rhalie-M. Potle, *Σύνταγμα τῶν Θείων καὶ Ἱερῶν Κανόνων*, (Athens, 1852), II, p. 21: «Ἐὰν τις πρεσβύτερος ἢ δάκρυος ἢ ... ἀπολαύσας τὴν ἐκείνου παρῶντος εἰς ἑτέραν ἐπισκοπὴν καὶ πενταλὸς μεταστὰς διατρέψῃ ἐν ἑκείνῃ παρῶντος... ταῦτα κολάσμεν μὴδὲν λειτουργεῖν». Canon XV of the Apostolic Canons, vol. II, p. 21.

40. «Ὅταν... ἐκταράσθαι τῆς ἰδίας ἐκκλησίας... αὐτοὶ αὐδαμῶς δεχτοὶ ὑπέμειναν εἶναι ἐν ἑτέρᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ». Canon XVI of the First Nicene Council, II, pp. 148-149.

41. «Ὅταν ἐπὶ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν μὴ μεταβαίμεν, μῆτε ἐπισκοπὴν, μῆτε πρεσβυτερίαν, μῆτε δάκρυον». Canon XV of the First Nicene Council, II, p. 148.

42. Nicephorus Blemmydes, *Curriculum vitae et carmina*, ed., August Heisenberg, (Leipzig, 1849), p. 7; Spyridon Lampros, *Μιχαὴλ Ἀχομινάτορ καὶ Χιουτὸν τὸ Σουλτανα*, (Athens, 1884), II, p. 276, 4-6. «Καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν εὐδαμονία τὸ ῥωμαϊστὶ κράτος ἐπανέστη διὰ τῆς ἀρίστης ἡγεμονίας τῆς αὐτῆς βασιλείας. Consider also, II, p. 355, 7; 152, 1-4.

43. *ibid.*, II, p. 150, 1; 152, 9: «τὸ ἔθνος κράτος σου»; «Θεοτάτων αὐτοκρατορῶν, 264, 18. «τῷ θεοδόξιστῳ ἡμῶν αὐτοκράτορα ὡς καὶ εἰς ἐπιστημονάρχην ἐπιστημονῶν παρὰ θεοῦ οὐ μόνον τῶν κατὰ πολιτικὴν ἀριστοτεχνίαν παρ' ἀνθρώπων ἐνεργημάτων εὖτα καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ». E. Kurtz, «Tri archiepiscopi graeculi metropolitae ephesskago Nikolaja Mesaritas», *Visantiiskii Vremennik*, XII (1906), 104, 4-7.

44. The Metropolitan of Athens Michael Choniates wrote to Theodore Lascaris that the people of Greece considered him the legitimate Byzantine Emperor, because: «when the throne of Constantinople fell, he wrote him, you restored it becoming its lawful heir and successor and the legitimate Emperor. You rescued the citizens of the Empire becoming their leader, guide, sustainer and saviour. How could you then not be their lawful *basileus*, having proven yourself so superior to all others, since you restored a fallen Kingdom?». Lampros, *op. cit.*, II, p. 151.

45. The frontiers of the Nicene State, during this period cannot be

quickly spread in the islands and the mainland of Greece. From his exile in the island of Keos, the erudite Metropolitan of Athens, Michael Choniates, on more than one occasion acknowledged in his letters the claims of Theodore's legitimacy to the Byzantine throne⁴⁴. This is not an isolated incident revealing the sentiments of a particular individual towards Theodore. In 1209, the Church of Cyprus sent to Nicaea a delegation to request from Lascaris the investiture of its autocephalous archbishop⁴⁵. The mission of this delegation implies that the Cypriote Church had recognized Theodore's claims and at the same time the temporary residence of the patriarch in Nicaea⁴⁶.

Theodore also had issued an order (ca 1208 - 1210), demanding that his subjects take an oath of fidelity and allegiance to his rule and imperial family. Even the clergy took this oath, issuing a *tomos* in which they declared their fidelity to the Emperor and his son Nicholas⁴⁷. The *tomos* was signed by the Patriarch Mi-

precisely delineated. However, we do know that Lascaris' domain included all the coast of Asia Minor from the river Indus to Amastris on the Black Sea. Peter Charanis, «On the Asiatic Frontiers of the Empire of Nicaea», *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XIII (1947), 58. The idea of a Greek-controlled enclave within the domains of the Seljuk Sultanate has been dismissed by Robert Lee Wolff, «The Lascarids' Asiatic Frontiers once more», *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XV (1949), 196ff.

44. Lampros, *op. cit.*, II, p. 150, 17-24; 276, 24-277, 1. «Σὺ πόλεως ταύτης καὶ ναυῶν ἐκταράσθαι σιδότας καὶ διατρέψας, καὶ εἰς γαίῶντος ἡγεῖν τὸ σὸν κράτος κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ αὐτοκρατορικοῦ κράτους σου καὶ ἰσχυρῶς τὸ κράτος τοῦ κράτους ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς βασιλείας». On Michael Choniates, H. -G. Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 637ff and 663ff.

45. K. Chatzepsaltes, «Ἡ Ἐκκλησία Κύπρου καὶ τὸ ἐν Νίκαιᾳ Οἰκουμενικὸν Πάτρισμα», *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία*, XXVIII (1964), 141-168. The autocephalous Archbishop of Cyprus was traditionally invested, like the patriarch by the Emperor of Constantinople. Neilas Doxapatres, Migne, PG 132:1907; Brehier, *op. cit.*, p. 430, esp., 456-466.

46. The Cypriote Archbishop, Isaias, was elected by the clergy of the island and the people around April 1, 1209. However, his election could not be considered valid because there was no Byzantine Emperor to invest him with the symbols of his office. In 1209, the bishop of Paphos, Savas went to Nicaea to secure the validity of Isaias' election from the Emperor and the Patriarchal Synod which convened on June 17th of the same year, ratifying Isaias' election.

47. N. Oikonomides, «Cinq Actes inédits du Patriarche Michel Autoreianos», *Revue des Études Byzantines*, XXV (1967), 113-145, esp., 136-139. The oath of fidelity was usually taken by the functionaries of the imperial

chael Autoreianos and the standing synod. The same oath had to be taken by everybody - the aristocracy, the army and the people. In the *tomos*, Theodore's son, Nicholas is mentioned repeatedly as *basileus* and successor-in-title, apparently signifying Theodore's determination to secure on the Byzantine throne a dynasty of his own⁴⁸.

With regard to the organization of the Byzantine State of Nicaea, Theodore entrusted the key positions of his government and of his army to the ruling Byzantine aristocracy which fled to Asia Minor, subsequent to 1204⁴⁹. For their services, he freely distributed important titles and high positions and in many cases even land grants⁵⁰. He also invited to his court from the Greek speaking lands people who could contribute with their learning and skills to the commonwealth of the Nicene State. On several occasions, men who could not endure living under the Latins came to Nicaea, some even carrying with them letters of recommenda-

court and the dignitaries traditionally after the coronation of a new Emperor. The best study on the subject is the article of N. G. Svoronos, «Le serment de fidelite à l'Empereur Byzantin et sa signification constitutionnelle», *Revue des Études Byzantines*, IX (1951), 106-142, esp. 125ff. For the *tomos* see also V. Laurent, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, Fasc. IV. *Les Regestes de 1208 à 1309*, (Paris, 1971), No. 1207, pp. 6-8.

48. *ibid.*, p. 137ff and 143-144. By associating his son with the Empire, Theodore wanted to establish Nicholas' dynastic claims as heir and successor to the throne.

49. Peter Charanis, «On the Social Structure and Economic Organization of the Byzantine Empire in the Thirteenth Century and Later», *Byzantinoslavica*, XII (1951), 97ff; M.A. Andreeva, *op. cit.*, p. 32ff, 113-127. The most important aristocratic families that dominated the scene in Nicaea were the Palaeologoi, Vatatzae, Rauloi, Kamytzae, Aprenoi, Tarchaneiotae and Philanthropenoi. Theodore Lascaris' rise to power largely depended on the support of these families whose influence and power had grown immensely during the last two centuries. Acropolites implied that the rise to power of Theodore was decided by the landed aristocracy — περιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν — and the higher clergy, both of whom controlled the land of western Asia Minor. *Acr.*, p. 117. 7-8.

Of Theodore's agrarian policy and relations with the landed aristocracy, consider: H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, «La politique Agraire des Empereurs de Nicee», *Byzantion*, XXVIII (1958), 51ff.

50. These land grants were given only for the duration of the holder's life and could not pass from father to son. Charanis, *On the Social Structure*, *op. cit.*, p. 105. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, *loc. cit.*; Andreeva, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-127, esp., 114-116.

tion from fellow Greeks⁵¹. The contribution of these men, representing a wide spectrum of background and interest, enriched the intellectual life of the Nicene Kingdom providing at the same time a capable political and ecclesiastical leadership.

The Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople took up residence in the monastery of Yakinthos where the synods of the Church were usually convened⁵². The synodal acts of the period 1208-1214 convince us that the Nicene clergy, though not completely subservient to Theodore's demands, faithfully went along with his policies endorsing his campaigns against the Latins and the rival principality of Trebizond. The Church issued a *tomos* addressed to the army, urging the soldiers to give their faithful support to the Emperor and promising to absolve the sins of those who would sacrifice their lives on the battlefield in his service⁵³.

This kind of dispensation is nowhere to be found in the teachings of the Orthodox Church⁵⁴. It was obviously promulgated at

51. The Metropolitan of Athens Michael Choniates recommended to Theodore Lascaris, Chalkoutzes, a Greek from Negropont, Lampros, *op. cit.*, II, p. 277, 1-14.

Other refugees in Nicaea were a certain hierarch from Crete with whom Michael Choniates corresponded, *ibid.*, pp. 279-280, and a Metropolitan from Mitylene whom Lascaris introduced to Nicholas Mesarites, then Metropolitan of Ephesos, requesting a bishopric for this man until he returns back to his own see which was at the time under the Latins. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, 110. Choniates also recommended to the Patriarch Manuel Sarantenos his *charophylax* George Bardanes. Lampros, *op. cit.*, II, p. 337ff. Theodore's intervention on behalf of the Metropolitan from Mitylene implies that the self exiled Orthodox ecclesiastics were not prohibited from being active in the life of the Church. In fact, their appointment in another see, while their own was vacant, though uncanonical in principle, did not encounter any adverse criticism perhaps because the Church was in need of spiritual leadership.

52. Chatzepsaltes, *op. cit.*, p. 166ff.

53. Oikonomides, *op. cit.*, p. 119.64: «Ἀνδρίξεσθε οὖν καὶ κραταιούσθω ἡ καρδία ὑμῶν καὶ κατισχύετε παντὸς ἀνθισταμένου καὶ ἀντιπίπτοντος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸ ἱερατικόν, τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐνδυσάμενοι ταῖς εὐχαῖς ὑμῶν συναρήμεν... Παρ' οὗ καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν μεγάλην δωρεάν τῆς αὐτοῦ δεξάμενοι χάριτος ἔομεν...». Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1205, pp. 3-5.

54. The idea of a holy war was discouraged by the Church, V. Laurent, «L'idée de guerre sainte et la tradition byzantine», *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Europeen*, XXIII (1946), 71-98. Although the canons of the Church pro-

the instigation of Theodore who wished to bestow on his soldiers the same spiritual privileges the Latin soldiers had received from the Pope. This same dispensation, the Church granting the forgiveness of sins, was also promulgated and granted to Theodore in a special synodal act signed by the patriarch⁵⁵. The synodal acts, heretofore mentioned, constantly emphasize and praise Theodore's merits as head of the state and defender of the Church. This kind of praise and oratory is commonplace in Byzantine literature but the demands Theodore exacted are noteworthy as indicating a strong and determined ruler. The oath of fidelity, the remission of his sins and those of his soldiers, all imposed and exacted from the Church without protest, indicate that the clergy willingly submitted to his policies perhaps because they had faith in his leadership, entertaining at the same time the hope of an early return to Constantinople.

hibited the administration of the sacraments to soldiers who had killed on the battlefield, Saint Basil had proposed an excommunication of a three year period from the sacraments. Later canonists, Skylitzes-Gedrenos, Balsamon and Zonaras tried to give a less harsh interpretation to the canons of the Church and the teachings of the Fathers.

55. Oikonomides, *op. cit.*, p. 120. 23: «... ἡμῖν ἀποκαταστήσαι νικητὴν λαμπρόν τε καὶ εὐθυμόν τηρούμενον καὶ πολυχρόνιον τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῇ, ὃς καὶ δι' ἡμῶν, τῶν εἰ καὶ ἀναξίων ἄλλ' οὖν ἐλέει αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀποστολικὴν λαχόντων καθέδραν, συγχωρεῖ σοι πάντα τὰ βίω, ὡς ἀνθρώπῳ πεπλημμελημένα σοι μέχρι τοῦ νῦν». Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1206, pp. 5-6.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF EPIROS IN THE XIIIc

Surprisingly enough, no Byzantine historian ever undertook the task of writing the history of thirteenth century Epiros. The reason for this is that the pro-Nicene historians regarded Epiros' meteoric rise as an act of rebellion against the divinely appointed rulers of Nicaea. Consequently, the accounts of Acropolites and Nicephoros Gregoras, who only sporadically mention the Angei, are too brief and biased to delineate Epiros' history on their base alone.

Turning to the Epirote sources, apart from a monk's chronicle, the *Vita S. Theodoraē*¹, they mainly consist of correspondence and ecclesiastical documents which undoubtedly are of great importance for the Nicene-Epirote ecclesiastical relations but of little value for examining the history of the foundations of Epiros. In fact, its early history and Michael Angelos' rise to power despite some noteworthy attempts have not heretofore become the subject of an accurate and comprehensive study. Over a long period of time, scholars have mistakenly referred to Michael as despot and the principality he founded as a despotate², an anachronism erroneously applied to Epiros and its rulers at this point in their history³. On the other hand, D. M. Nicol in his attempt

1. Job Monachos, *Vita S. Theodoraē Reginae*, Migne PG 127: cols. 903-908. For other editions see, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, Subsidia Hagiographica*, ed., Francois Halkin, vol. II, (Bruxelles, 1957), p. 273. S. Petrides, «Le moine Job», *Échos d'Orient*, XV (1912), 43-48, has identified the author of the *Vita* with the thirteenth century anti-Unionist monk Job Meles or Melias of the Monastery of Iasitou in Constantinople.

2. Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-66; 159-170; N. B. Tomadakes, «Τὰ Ἑλληνικά Κράτη τῆς Φραγκοκρατίας», *Σύλλαβος Βυζαντινῶν Μελετῶν καὶ Κειμένων*, (Athens, 1961), pp. 61-63; «Οἱ Λόγιοι τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου», *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν XXVII* (1957), 3-5.

3. Bozidar Ferjancic, *Despota u Vizantiji i juznoslovenskim zemljama*, (Belgrade, 1960).

to balance the unfavorable accounts of the pro-Nicene historians, went to the other extreme discrediting the Lascarids and vindicating the dynastic rights to the Byzantine throne of the Angeloi⁴. As a result, fundamental questions pertaining to the origins of the foundation of the Epirote State and the circumstances under which Michael Angelos rose to power, were left unanswered or merely dismissed. Yet in order to understand the dynastic conflict between the Angeloi and the Lascarids and the resulting ecclesiastical controversy, it is imperative to establish the grounds of their respective claims as independent rulers and pretenders to the Byzantine throne, a study long overdue in the history of these two states.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF EPIROS

As a rule, modern works on the history of the foundation of Epiros as an independent state in the early part of the thirteenth century derive their information from the *Vita S. Theodoraē*, ignoring the conflicting accounts of other sources and the problems raised therein¹. With little if any variation they are an elaboration on the *Vita's* account which begins with Michael's odyssey from the Peloponnesos to Epiros². According to this, shortly after the fall of Constantinople, Michael left his eparchy in Peloponnesos to help his relative, Senacherim, the governor of Nicopolis, quell a revolt that had broken out in that city. However, before Michael arrived, Senacherim had been murdered and the anarchists had taken control. To avenge the death of his relative, Michael crushed the revolt, taking into his hands the vacant leadership of the theme. Being himself a widower, he married the widow of Senacherim and proclaimed himself governor of Epiros³.

1. Romanos, *op. cit.*, esp. p. 4, 14, 28; Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-64. Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-17. The *Vita's* account is discredited by numerous inaccuracies and inconsistencies. For instance, its author erroneously dates the blinding of the young John Lascaris by Michael VIII at the time Constantinople fell to the Latins (1204): Λατίνων φεύ, τῆς Κωνσταντίνου κρατησάντων ἡχμαλώτεται μὲν παρ' ἐκείνων σὺν ἄλλοις πολλοῖς καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξιος. Ἐκτυφλοῦται δὲ Λάσκαρις ὁ παῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀνατολῇ, παρὰ Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου τοῦ τὴν βασιλείαν τότε δραξαμένου· καὶ λοιπὸν ἐπλήσθη τὰ πάντα ταραχῆς καὶ συγχύσεως. Migne, PG 127: 904B. John Lascaris the son of Theodore II Lascaris was blinded by Michael VIII on December 25, 1261. Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 145 n. 27a.

2. Migne, PG 127: cols 904B-905A.

3. The *Vita* here again contradicts itself. Michael Angelos could not receive Senacherim's widow as his wife because he was married to the widow's first cousin: «δυσὶ πρότερον οὗτοι πρωτεξαδέλφαις συζευθέντες...» PG 127: col. 904A; «λαμβάνει δὲ σὴν ἐκείνου γυναῖκα...» col. 904B. Also, cf. Geoffroy de Villehardouin, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

Ferjančić maintains that Michael I Angelos (1204-1215) and his successor Theodore I (1215-1230), never possessed the title of despot. The sources of this period mention only two despots, Manuel and Constantine Angelos, both of whom received their title during the short reign of Theodore I Angelos (1225-1230), the Emperor of Thessalonica. In the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century the title of despot was bestowed by the Byzantine Emperor of Constantinople on the Angeloi who ruled Epiros until 1449. Working independently from Ferjančić, L. Stier-Revue des Études Byzantines XVII (1959), 120-123.

4. D. M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, (Oxford, 1957), pp. 11-15.

After his proclamation, Michael launched an unsuccessful campaign against the Latins in the Morea⁴ to regain his former territories which had since fallen under Latin rule. Losing all hope of regaining the land, upon his return to Epiros Michael supposedly assumed the title of despot⁵. His new office was then formally ratified by the ex-emperor Alexios III upon a brief sojourn to Michael's court⁶. Thereafter Michael and his successors were called despots and their state the despotate of Epiros.

Interestingly enough, no other source has verified the *Vita's* supposition that Michael Angelos, prior to this involvement in Epiros, was governor of Peloponnesos. On the contrary, this assertion is contradicted by Villehardouin who explicitly mentions Michael being in the company of Boniface of Montferrat after 1204 and suddenly deserting him to go to Arta to marry the daughter of a rich Greek⁷. Furthermore the *Vita* is contradicted by the historian Nicetas Choniates who mentions Michael Angelos — certainly not as governor of Peloponnesos — but as *phorologos* of Mylasa in Asia Minor⁸. This post was evidently held by Michael until the end of the troublesome reign of Alexios III against whom he raised the banner of revolt, allying himself with Rukneddin Sulaiman (ca. 1201), the Sultan of Iconium⁹.

4. Villeh., *op. cit.*, II, pp. 138-139; *The Chronicle of Morea*, ed., John Schmitt, (London, 1904), lines 1505-1738, mentions the battles but not explicitly Michael's name.

5. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 14; P. Aravantinos, *Χρονολογία της Ἡπείρου*, (Athens, 1856), I, p. 58.

6. Acr. pp. 13, 8. 23-14. 8. 4 does not mention the ratification of Michael's office by the ex-emperor Alexios III. The *Vita* vaguely says that Alexios granted to Michael the government of the region: εἰς κληῖρον ἐδόθη αὐτῷ τε τῷ Μιχαήλ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἡ λαχοῦσα τότε τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἀρχή. Migne, *PG* 127: col. 904C.

7. Villeh. *op. cit.* II pp. 108-111.

8. Nic. Chon. 700. 20-23: Καὶ Μιχαήλ δὲ τις ἐκ νοθείας υἱὸς Ἰωάννου τοῦ σεβαστοκράτορος τῆς ἐπαρχίας Μυλάσσης φορολόγος ἀποσταλὲς... That during the last years of Isaac II (1185-1195) Michael governed the theme of Mylassa and Melanoudion with the rank of *dux* and *anagrapheus* is also evinced from the acts of the Monastery of St. Paul of Latros. Fr. Miklosich et Jos. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi*, IV, (Vienna, 1871), pp. 321-322; Fr. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des östlichen Reiches* (Munich, 1932) no. 1633, pp. 102-3.

9. Nic. Chon. 700. 23 701.2: νέος καὶ αὐθάδης (ὁ Μιχαήλ) τοῦ βασιλέως (Ἀλεξίου) ἀφίσταται, πολέμῳ δὲ ἡττηθεὶς καὶ φυγὼν τῷ Ρουκρατινῷ (Rukned-

Since the histories of Villehardouin and Nicetas Choniates are by far more credible than the *Vita's* account, it becomes a necessity to reconstruct the history of the foundation of the principality of Epiros. The last reference made to Michael before his descent to Greece is as *dux* and *phorologos* and later as an ally of the Sultan of Iconium. Following his sojourn there, and sometime after the fall of Constantinople, Michael is mentioned by Villehardouin as serving under Boniface of Montferrat who was obviously in need of support¹⁰. But having realized that there was nothing to be gained from this alliance he decided to go to Epiros. According to Nicol it was not as a stranger that he ap-

din Sulaiman) προσέρχεται... Choniates, 701.5 says that Michael as an ally of the Sultan proved worse than an infidel: χείρων τῶν ἀλλοφύλων καὶ νηλεέστερος ἀνδροφόνος δεικνύμενος. Nicol who follows the *Vita's* account rejects this view maintaining like P. Wittek, «L'Építaphe d'un Comnène à Konia», *Byzantion* X (1935), 512 ff and XII (1937) 209-211, that this Michael Angelos is a different person than the founder of the principality of Epiros and that «Nicetas [Choniates] seems to have confused two Michaels, each the bastard son of a different John Comnenos». *op. cit.*, p. 22. 11. Wittek has produced an inscription reading: ἐνταῦθα κεῖται πορφυρογεννήτων γόνος Μιχαήλ ἀμυρᾶς ὠλάνης, ἔγκον τοῦ πανευγενεστάτου δισεγκόνου τῶν κοιδήμων πορφυρογεννήτων βασιλέων, κυροῦ Ἰω(άννου) Κομνηνοῦ τοῦ Μαυροζώμη, υἱὸς δὲ τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ ἐν ἔτει SAS' 6806, i. e. 1297 (Ἰνδικτιῶνος) ια', μηνὶ Νοεμβρίῳ α'. According to Wittek this Michael is the same with the one who rebelled against Alexios III but not the same with Michael of Epiros. The fact that this inscription is dated 1297 makes Wittek's point very hypothetical. On the other hand Nicetas Choniates identified the rebel Michael with the founder of Epiros as: Αἰτωλῖαν δὲ καὶ τὰ τῇ Νικοπόλει προσοριζόμενα καὶ ὅσα πρόεισιν ἐς Ἐπίδαμνον, ὁ Μιχαήλ ιδιώσατο, ὃν ἐκ σπερμάτων σκοτίων ὁ σεβαστοκράτωρ ἐφύτευσεν Ἰωάννης. Nic. Chon. 841. 6-9. Compare also his previous statement Μιχαήλ δὲ τις ἐκ νοθείας υἱὸς Ἰωάννου τοῦ σεβαστοκράτορος. 700. 20ff. Lucien Stiernon, «Les Origines du despotat d'Épire», *Revue des Études Byzantines* XVII (1959) 96 ff. proved that there is only one Michael and not two as Wittek has maintained. Stiernon, pp. 114-126, has convincingly shown (1) that there was only one Michael and not two as have Wittek-Nicol proposed. (2) Michael's father, John the *sevastokrator*, bore officially the name of Doucas. (3) Michael himself, his brothers and sons, are of the Comnenoi Doucas family. (4) Michael exercised the functions of *dux* and *anagrapheus* (*phorologos*) in the theme of Mylassa and Melanoudion. (5) In Epiros he never became despot and consequently never the founder of a despotate. (6) The terms, despot and despotate, applied to Michael are absent from contemporary Byzantine or Western sources.

10. When Michael joined his company, Boniface of Montferrat was preparing for an expedition to the south of Greece. Villeh. *op. cit.* pp. 109-110.

peared there, for the region was familiar to him supposedly through his father, the *sevastocrator* John Angelos Comnenos¹¹, who had ruled over it as governor of Thessaly and Epiros¹². Admittedly, the particulars of his first activities in Epiros beyond this point cannot be established except that within a short period he assumed full control of the region to the extent to be able to wage wars in the Morea, Thessaly and Macedonia^{12a}.

With regard to the formal recognition of Michael as despot and ruler of a despotate, the sources of this period, including the *Vita S. Theodora*, nowhere mention anything that could even remotely substantiate it. According to the Byzantine *cursus honorum*, the office of despot was usually conferred by the Emperor himself upon his son-in-law designating him as heir presumptive to the Byzantine throne on the event that the Emperor did not have a male issue to succeed him¹³. As such, the office of despot could not be hereditary nor could it be linked with the jurisdiction and administration of a certain territory or theme¹⁴. Yet, over a long period of time Michael Angelos has been referred to as despot and his principality as a despotate erroneously assuming that the ex-Emperor, Alexios III, during his sojourn in Epiros, had designated Michael as despot and heir to the Byzantine throne¹⁵. However this has never been documented and indeed never could be since Michael was not his son-in-law and the title was never conferred upon him by the legitimate Emperor, Theodore Lascaris. Besides, the office of despot had already been conferred by Alexios on his own son-in-law Theodore Lascaris¹⁶, who

11. John Angelos Comnenos, the son of Constantine Angelos received the dignity of *sevastocrator* from Isaac II ca. 1186. Nic. Chon. p. 482, 23. See also, D. I. Polemis, *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*, (London, 1968), pp. 87-88.

12. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 11, but without any documentation.

12a. Stiernon, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

13. R. Guiland, «Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'empire byzantin, le Despote», *Revue des Études Byzantines*, XVII (1959), 52-89, esp., 67-69 and 73; G. Ostrogorsky, «Urum-Despotes», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, VII (1951), 448-460, esp., 458-459; Ferjančic, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-213. Stiernon, *op. cit.*, pp. 124.

14. Guiland, *ibid.*, p. 68.

15. Nicol, *op. cit.* p. 15 «... Alexios gave official recognition to the Despotate of Epiros and confirmed it as the lawful property of Michael and his successors».

16. The first to be nominated despot by Alexios III was his son-in-law

carried the title of despot until the time he was proclaimed Emperor in Nicaea.

Far from being a despot or the founder of a despotate, Michael was in reality the scion of a well known byzantine family who benefited from the disintegration of the Empire carving for himself a territory over which he exercised his sovereignty as an independent ruler¹⁷. That Michael did not entertain any serious thoughts of claiming the title of despot or for that matter the *imperium* is indicated by the fact that throughout his ten-year rule he refrained from assuming any particular title that would seem to antagonize the claims to the Byzantine throne of the Nicene rulers¹⁸. The Epirote sources of this period amply attest to this as is evinced in a commercial transaction with Venice (1210), in which Michael signed the treaty as «ego Michael Comnanus Dux, filius quondam sevastocratoris Ioannis Ducis». ¹⁹ It should be noted that the title *sevastocrator* ranked below that of the despot and Michael could claim only the honorific dignity of

Alexios Palaeologos. Acr., p. 9.5.1. «Ἀλεξίῳ τῷ Παλαιολόγῳ ὃν καὶ δεσπότην τετίμηκεν». After Alexios Palaeologos' death, he elevated to the office of despot his second son-in-law Theodore Lascaris «καὶ δεσπότην ὑπ' ἐκείνων τετιμημένον». Theodore kept the office of despot even in Nicaea, Nic. Chon., p. 756.10; Acr., p. 11.7.5 «καὶ ὡς δεσπότην παρὰ πάντων φημιζόμενον τοῦ Λασκάρου».

17. Acr., p. 13.8.25-14.8.4 «ἦν γὰρ οὗτος [ὁ Μιχαήλ] τῷ τότε μέρους τινὸς τῆς Παλαιᾶς Ἡπείρου κρατήσας... καὶ ἦν οὗτος δυναστεύων τῆς τοιαύτης χώρας Ἰωαννίνων γὰρ ἤρχε καὶ Ἀρτης καὶ μέχρι Ναυπάκτου»; Nic. Chon., p. 841. 7-9.

18. The only official surviving documents from Michael's rule are in Latin where he styles himself «Michael Comnanus Dux». Paul Lemerle, «Trois Actes du Despote d'Épire Michel II concernant Corfou connus en traduction latine», *Προσφορά εἰς Στὴλωνα Π. Κυριακίδη* (Thessalonica, 1953), 407. There exist two seals of Michael bearing the legends: «Σφράγισμα γραφῶν Μιχαήλ Δούκα φέρω σεβαστοκρατοροῦντος εὐθαλοῦς κλάδου», and «Σφράγισμα γραφῶν Μιχαήλ Δούκα φέρω», cited by Polemis, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

19. G. Tafel and G. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, (Vienna, 1856), v. II p. 119. The conditions of this agreement were very humiliating for Michael because he was recognizing Venice's sovereignty over his own lands restoring to them the same privileges they had enjoyed during the reign of Manuel Comnenos (1143-1180); «Debent autem vestri Venetici in omnibus terris quas habeo et habebō et in eis, que sunt michi concessae per uos, in quibus volueritis vos et successores vestri habere ecclesiam et curiam et fondicum et omnes alias honorificentias... quas habebant tempore domini Emanuelis Imperatoris». p. 121. Lemerle, *op. cit.* pp. 407-8.

his father. This fact is also attested from the correspondence of the erudite Metropolitan of Athens Michael Choniates who besides his contacts with the Kingdom of Nicaea had also maintained friendly relations with Michael Angelos whom he however never addressed in his letters as despot or *basileus* but simply as «κράτιστον» and «κύριον», «θεόθεν πεπιστευμένον ὅπως διατηρή τοὺς ὑπ' αὐτὸν λαοὺς ἐλευθέρους ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλικῆς τυραννίδος». ²⁰ Similarly in a panegyric dedicated to Michael the Metropolitan of Naupactos John Apocaukos addressed Michael as «τοῦ δουκὸς κυροῦ τοῦ περιποθήτου υἱοῦ τοῦ περιβοήτου καὶ ἀειμακαρίστου σεβαστοκράτορος». ²¹ In the event that Michael could have claimed for himself a higher title of nobility Apocaukos surely would have contained it in the text of his encomium. In the same manner, the historian George Acropolites who usually expresses the Nicene bias towards Epiros mentions Michael without ascribing to him any particular title except that he was «... δυναστεύων... Ἰωαννίνων... Ἄρτης καὶ μέχρι Ναυπάκτου». ²² In his brief exposé of Epiros, Acropolites also states that Michael's brother Theodore Angelos, the future ruler of Epiros, was for several years in the service of Theodore Lascaris and that he was finally released of his duties only after he had pledged to remain faithful to the Lascarids ²³. Need-

20. Μιχαήλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ Σωζόμενα, *op. cit.*, II, p. 327, 350.

21. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, «Περὶ συνοικισμοῦ τῶν Ἰωαννίνων μετὰ τὴν φραγκικὴν κατὰκτησιν τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως», *Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορικῆς καὶ Ἐθνολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας τῆς Ἑλλάδος* III (1891), pp. 451-455, esp. p. 455. Elsewhere Apocaukos mentions Michael simply as: τοῦ ἀοιδίμου Κύρ Μιχαήλ τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ in V. G. Vasiljevski, «Epirotica saeculi XIII» *Vizantiiski Vremennik*, III (1896) p. 270.

22. Acr. p. 14.8.3-4.

23. Acr. p. 24.14.25; 25.14.2 «ὅρκοις πρῶτον ἐμπεδωσάμενος πίστιν δουλείας εἰς τοῦτον φυλάττειν καὶ εἰς τοὺς μετ' αὐτὸν τῶν Ρωμαίων κατάρξοντας». Theodore Lascaris had issued an order shortly after his coronation (ca 1208-1210), demanding that all his subjects take an oath of fidelity to his rule. N. Oikonomides, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 136-139; N. G. Svoronos, *op. cit.*, p. 125ff; Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54; Romanos, *op. cit.*, p. 14; maintain that Theodore Angelos took the oath before Theodore Lascaris was anointed and crowned Emperor of the Greeks, resting their argument on a passage of George Bardanes' letter to Germanos II. Bardanes argued that the oath was not valid because Theodore Lascaris «οὐδὲ πορφυρίδα περιεβάλλετο» but «ἦν τόπους τόπων ἀμείβων, μηδὲ τοῖς ποσὶν εὐρίσκειν ἀνάπαυσιν...» cited by Meliarakes, p. 54. However, Bardanes' argument is weakened not only by Acropolites' account but also from the *tomos* which was issued between 1208-1210

less to say Michael had all along pressed for his brother's release especially as he had not a heir old enough to succeed him ²⁴.

Upon his arrival in Greece, Theodore at first spent several years in Peloponnesos battling against the Latins and trying unsuccessfully to consolidate his authority around Corinth and Argos ²⁵. However, with Michael's assassination in 1215 — the motives of his assassination are obscure — ²⁶ Theodore immediately assumed the leadership of the state succeeding his brother as ruler of Epiros ²⁷.

At the time of Michael's death, Epiros' territories extended along the Epirote and Acarnanian coast from Naupactos to Dyrrachium including also the islands of Corfu and Leucas ²⁸. Whereas Michael had concentrated his military activities in Peloponnesos and along the Ionian coast, Theodore immediately turned his armies against the Latins and their various strongholds in Thessaly and Macedonia. Within the span of a decade his brilliant military victories against the Latins and the Bulgars — indeed the achievements of a bold and genius strategist — included the conquest of the Lombard baronies of Thessaly with the huge fortress of Platamona, situated northeast of Larissa, Neopatras and a series of fortresses in Macedonia, including Servia, Berroia, Prosek, Achrida, Serres and Drama ²⁹. Thus prior to his greatest military triumph, the conquest of Thessalonica in 1224, Theodore was the acknowledged ruler of all the territories extending along the Ionian coast from Naupactos to Dyrrachium, including also a great part of Bulgaria and Macedonia.

by the Patriarch Michael Autoreianos; see discussion in this work, p. 27ff.

24. Acr. *loc. cit.*

25. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 25ff; Romanos *op. cit.* p. 6.

26. Acr. p. 25.14.3: μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ φονεύεται παρά του τῶν ὑπηρετῶν ὁ Μιχαήλ νύκτωρ ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης συγκαθεύδων τῇ γυναικί. Ῥωμαῖος δὲ ἦν τῷ φονευτῇ τοῦνομα. The *Vita* does not mention that Michael was murdered, col.905A.

27. Although all the sources agree that it was Theodore who succeeded Michael, the author of the *Vita* maintains that Michael was succeeded by a son of his, named also Michael who after an impressive career was murdered to be succeeded by a brother of his, Theodore. Obviously the *Vita* at this point has confused the names of the Epirote rulers as well as the time of their respective rule. *Vita*, Migne, PG 127:col. 905A.

28. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

29. *ibid.*, p. 48ff.

The capture of Thessalonica in 1224³⁰, the second city of Byzantium was a heavy blow to the Latins and a great achievement of the Epirote Greeks. Theodore's victory meant an unprecedented personal triumph. Even more the transformation of his state from a mere independent principality into a Kingdom. His proclamation and coronation to the Byzantine throne as *basileus* and *autocrator* was celebrated in Thessalonica³¹ to the dismay and outrage of the Nicene rulers who still remembered the pledge of loyalty that Theodore had given them³². However, with the conquest of Thessalonica and the greater part of Macedonia under his command, Theodore could justifiably claim to have opened the way to Constantinople making the dream of all the Greeks — the restoration of the Empire — almost a reality. As it was expected, the Kingdom of Nicaea refused to recognize his proclamation sending him an ultimatum to lay aside the crown and the purple³³. Compelled by the patriarch's and the Emperor's influence, the Metropolitan of Thessalonica Constantine Mesopotamites refused to crown Theodore Angelos³⁴. The rite was finally performed by Demetrios Chomatianos the autocephalous Archbishop of Achrida³⁵.

Upon his proclamation, Theodore proceeded to reorganize his state, making Thessalonica his provisional capital and creating a new nobility composed of the titled-court aristocracy and the landed-gentry. Furthermore, he began to organize his imperial court modeling it after the Byzantine court of Constantinople by nominating despots³⁶, *sevastocrators* and *protovestiarioi* out of the

30. B. Sinogowitz, «Zur Eroberung Thessalonikes im Herbst 1224», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, VI (1952), 28; Jean Longnon, «La Reprise de Salonique par les Grecs en 1224», *Actes du VI Congrès International d'Études Byzantines*, I (Paris, 1950), 141-146, esp. 141-143.

31. Lucien Stiernon, «Les Origines du Despotat d'Épire. La Date du couronnement de Theodore Doukas», *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines*, II (Belgrade, 1964), 197-202. Stiernon proposed that Theodore's coronation took place in late 1227 or the beginning of 1228.

32. Acr. p. 33.21.14ff: «ὁ δὲ Κομνηνὸς Θεόδωρος... μὴ θέλων μένειν ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ τάξει ἀλλὰ τὰ τῆς βασιλείας σφετερισάμενος... πορφυρίδα τε ὑπενδύεται καὶ ἐρυθρὰ περιβάλλεται πέδιλα».

33. *ibid.*, p. 34.21.13-16.

34. *ibid.*, p. 33.21.21ff.

35. *ibid.*, p. 34.21.1.

36. The first Epirote nobles to be nominated despots, Manuel and

local *archontes* and the members of his immediate family and the governors of the major urban centers of his realm³⁷. He also accorded land privileges to bishops and abbots thus increasing their land holdings and economic power³⁸.

As a result of Theodore's expansionist policy the ecclesiastical *τάξις* of his principality had to be reorganized. Among his newly recovered territories there were vacant episcopates with numerous dioceses which lacked spiritual leadership and a sufficiently trained clergy. Furthermore, their ecclesiastical status had been altered during their captivity to accommodate the dictates of the Latin ecclesiastical organization³⁹. Consequently, Theodore Angelos and his ecclesiastical leadership faced a dual task: to restore these newly acquired sees to their appropriate status as episcopates and to fill their vacancies with newly elected ecclesiastics or give them back to their former prelates.

To meet these demands and function effectively the clergy of Epiros had also to be reorganized. Having severed their relations with the Patriarchate on account of its close ties with the court of the Lascarids, the highest ecclesiastical authority was now entrusted to the hands of the Synod, a collegiate tribunal compo-

Constantine Angelos were raised to the office soon after the proclamation of their brother Theodore in Thessalonica (1224-1225). Ferjančič, *op. cit.*, p. 213; Guillard, *op. cit.*, p. 74. Manuel is mentioned as despot in a *prostagma* by his brother Theodore: «τὸν πανευτυχέστατον δεσπότην καὶ περιπόθητον ἀντάδελφον τῆς βασιλείας μου κύριον Μανουὴλ τὸν Δούκαν» in A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, (St. Petersburg 1897), IV, 119.

37. Acr., p. 34.21.5-8; The names and the titles of the newly created aristocracy can be established from the *Synopticon* of Demetrios Chomatianos, in J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra et classica*, (Paris-Rome, 1891), VI, col. 785ff.

38. That the Angeloi were the dynasts and the owners of large estates can be adduced from a *chrysobull* of the despot Michael II Doukas, dated 1246. Miklosich-Müller, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 345-346 and V, pp. 14-15.

39. For an analysis of the *Partitio Romaniae* by the crusaders and its impact on the thematic organization of the Byzantine Empire, including the Epirote domains, see D. Zakythinos, «Μελέται περὶ τῆς διοικητικῆς διαρρέσεως καὶ τῆς ἐπαρχιακῆς διοικήσεως ἐν τῷ Βυζαντινῷ κράτει», *Ἐπιστημὴς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, XXI (1951), 179ff, esp., p. 194. The administrative changes affected by the Latins on the Greek ecclesiastical organization can be determined by comparing the *taktika*, the so called *Notitiae Episcopatum* with the Latin *Provinciae*; R. L. Wolff, «The Organization of the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople», *Traditio*, VI (1948), 33-60 esp. 39ff.

sed of the archbishop, metropolitan and their episcopal colleagues⁴⁰. The presiding officer of the tribunal, the archbishop or the metropolitan, usually issued the decisions of the Synod⁴¹. In addition, there were established two synodal courts, one in Naupactos, a metropolitan see headed by John Apocaukos⁴² and the other in Achrida, the autocephalous see of the archbishop Demetrios Chomatianos⁴³.

From the extensive correspondence of these two prelates we presume that their courts were mainly concerned with problems of Church administration, violation of civil and canon law and jurisdictional disputes involving occasionally *stauropegia* (patriarchal) foundations⁴⁴. Moreover, within the judicial system of the state, the Synod served as a judicial advisory council dealing

40. That the Synod was the highest ecclesiastical authority can be simply attested from the *Synodica* of the Epirote Church. Consider the following: Συνοδικὸν ἐπὶ προβολῇ τοῦ Βαρδάνου χαρτοφύλακος Ἀθηνῶν εἰς ἀρχιερέα Κερκυραίων in Vasiljevski, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-263; Πρᾶξις συνοδική περὶ τῆς τοῦ δεσπότη Θεοδώρου εἰς βασιλέα ἀναγορεύσεως, *ibid.*, pp. 285-286; also Πρὸς τὸν πατριάρχην πιττάκιον τῶν ὅλων ἀρχιερέων σχεδιασθὲν παρὰ τοῦ Ναυπάκτου. *ibid.*, pp. 288-293.

41. E. Herman, «Appunti sul diritto metropolitico nella Chiesa Bizantina», *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XIII, (1947), 522-550.

42. For Apocaukos' activities and his surviving *responsa* as a canon lawyer, see A. Papađopoulos-Kerameus, *Βυζαντινὴ* I (Athens, 1909), 3-30, containing Apocaukos' synodal acts promulgated either by him or by a synod he was heading. These acts deal with questions of canon law involving charges of adultery, jurisdictional disputes and synodal sanctions. The synodal court of Naupactos was headed by Apocaukos and the bishops of Arta, Acheloos, Ioannina, Dryinoupoleos, Bothrotou, Draganestou and Bonitzes. *ibid.*, document 9, p. 26.

43. Chomatianos, as competent canon lawyer had gained a great reputation among Theodore Angelos' subjects. There are numerous references made to his see as synodal court: Pitra, *op. cit.*, cols. 419; 229; 309; 289.

τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἱερῷ δικαστηρίῳ

τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἱερῷ συνεδρίῳ

τῷ συνοδικῷ δικαστηρίῳ τῇ ἡμῶν μετριότητι

The synod of Achrida was composed of the Archbishop, the Bishop of Berroia, the Bishop of Kastoria and several others from neighboring dioceses.

44. *ibid.*, cols. 339-350.

Chomatianos records a case involving two jurisdictional disputes over *stauropegia* foundations between the bishop of Bothrotou and the abbot of the monastery of Choteachovou. A *stauropegion* was a patriarchal foundation established in certain areas independent of the local episcopal authority.

with matters involving the violation of civil and criminal codes. In this respect, the synodal tribunal never decided an issue but only offered an expert advice.

Due to the personal influence of John Apocaukos, the see of Naupactos at first held a higher position than Achrida within the administrative structure of the state. However, with the accession of Demetrios Chomatianos to the archiepiscopate, Naupactos began steadily to decline as an ecclesiastical and judicial center soon to be replaced by Achrida, the new ecclesiastical capital of Theodore's realm⁴⁵. Naupactos' decline can be partly attributed to Apocaukos' advanced age and to his somewhat conservative attitude towards the ecclesiastical policies of Theodore Angelos. On the other hand, Achrida's position was greatly enhanced by Demetrios Chomatianos' competence as canonist and his active participation in Theodore Angelos' government as a strong advocate of the ecclesiastical independence of the Helladic provinces from the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate in Nicaea. As a result, Achrida enjoyed special privileges ranking the highest in the central and western areas of the Balkan peninsula rivaling Nicaea, the temporary residence of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch. Also Chomatianos' influence among his western colleagues rapidly increased so as to be unanimously acclaimed by them as their spokesman and recognized leader.

Having established his imperial authority over these territories, Theodore Angelos began to rule both in theory and in practice like the past Byzantine rulers. And it was as such that Demetrios Chomatianos addressed him a letter, where he discussed his ideas on kingship in raising the question of the relationship of the Emperor to the law⁴⁶. The Emperor, Chomatianos says in his opening paragraph is not subject to the human temptations and weaknesses for he resists the pleasures and luxuries that induce common man⁴⁷. The Emperor like Moses is a servant of God suf-

45. This is evinced by the fact that petitioners from the jurisdiction of Naupactos preferred to file their cases in Achrida rather than in Naupactos as in the case of a number of plaintiffs from the theme of Vagenitia. *ibid.*, cols. 159-164.

46. *ibid.*, cols. 473-478: «Περὶ τῶν παρὰ βασιλέως γινόμενων ποινῶν καὶ ὅπως αἱ ὑπὲρ ὠφελείας τοῦ κοινοῦ γινόμεναι οὐ λογίζονται αὐτῷ εἰς ἁμαρτίαν».

47. *ibid.*, cols., 473-474: «ὅτι δηλαδὴ σύ, οὐ δόξης ἐρῶν, οὐ χρημάτων,

fering for his people and finding solace only in the promise of a higher spiritual reward⁴⁸. His call as «a popular leader and general» — δημαγωγός τε καὶ στρατηγός — is one of toil and hardship. Yet his power is granted to him by God the Almighty. Whereas man is designed to different vocations and callings, the Emperor is called to become God's steward to serve the Empire's commonwealth:⁴⁹

For the imperial power is an institution ordained by God to protect the wellbeing of mankind. The *basileus* therefore cannot be expected to attain the perfection of an apostle neither of a philosopher nor of an ascetic but only that which befits His imperial majesty.⁵⁰

As the protector and the defender of the Empire, the *basileus* may render judgement and punishment in imitation to God who punishes those who transgress his commands. In this regard the Emperor is the earthly counterpart of God⁵¹. As God renders didactic punishment without transgressing the law that He has instituted, so the Emperor too renders judgement, acting in the public interest and like God he does not violate the law- being the law⁵².

Realizing that Theodore's claims to the *imperium* were sub-

οὐ κτημάτων, οὐ τρυφῆς, οὐ χλιδῆς, οὐδὲν τινος ἄλλου ὧν δεσμοῦνται οἱ χαμαὶ σπόμενοι...»

48. *ibid.*, col., 474.

49. *ibid.*, cols. 475-476

50. «Τὸν βασιλέα τοίνυν ὁ λόγος οὐκ ἀπαιτεῖ. οὔτε ἀποστολικήν, οὔτε φιλοσοφον εἶτουν ἀσκητὴν τελειότητα τὴν βασιλεῦσιν ἀρμόζουσιν». *ibid.*, col. 476.

In contrast to Demetrios Chomatianos' ideas of kingship Nicephoros Blemmydes, a court philosopher and ecclesiastic in Nicaea, maintained in his *Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριάς* that the *basileus* should strive after self-perfection: «χρὴ λοιπὸν τὸν βασιλέα προβασιλεύειν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ οὕτω δὴ τῶν περὶ αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἐκτός», in Migne PG 142 col. 659C. «And in order to achieve this goal he should become a philosopher-king because if the study of philosophy is the queen of all the sciences and the king stands above mankind then «... τί ἂν εἴη φιλοσοφίας δώρου τῷ βασιλεῖ πρεπωδέστερον;» col. 659AB. Thus he concluded, a kingdom ruled by a fool is also far from God's providence. *ibid.*, col. 659B.

51. Pitra, col. 477.

52. *ibid.*, οὕτω καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς εἴπερ κολάζει καθ' ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐστὶ κοινοφελῶς κολάζειν καὶ ὡς εἰπεῖν θεομιμήτως.

ject to continuous attacks by the Lascarids and the patriarch, the Epirote hierarchy also began to expound in a series of letters the theoretical justifications of Theodore's claims to the *imperium* and the policies he instituted as emperor. The Nicene rulers, however, were realistic enough to recognize that from a dynastic point of view the Angeloi could easily match their claims to the *imperium* lacking only the sanction and the approval of the Church- in this case the patriarch and his synod. Having at their aid the support of the Church, the Lascarids were more than willing to support the patriarch's vehement protests against Theodore Angelos' policy of ecclesiastical autonomy and the condemnation of Theodore's uncanonical anointment and coronation in Thessalonica by Demetrios Chomatianos. By involving the Church in this contest for imperial supremacy, the Lascarids knew that they could count on the support of the greater segment of the Orthodox Church which was ever ready to label any one of their opponents with the stigma of schism and heresy.

It is against this background, then, that the ecclesiastical conflict between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Synod of the northern Helladic provinces will be next examined in the aim of establishing their respective views on the problems of ecclesiastical autonomy within an independent Byzantine state, the patriarch's spiritual and jurisdictional authority and the contesting claims of the two rivals to the *imperium*, of the Angeloi and the Lascarids.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONFLICT

As a rule, the Byzantine Church kept silent and rather impartial during dynastic disputes to be vocal only when the orthodoxy of those involved was in question or when obvious injustices demanded public censure¹. However, now that the see of the Empire was captive and the Byzantine crown was contested by the Angeloi and the Lascaris in exile, the Church assumed a different role, by far more dynamic than it had ever enjoyed in the past². The only institution to survive the disintegration of the Empire after 1204 was the Church. Indeed, the

1. The Church usually demanded from the newly elected Emperor certain doctrinal guarantees. When these guarantees were exacted, the patriarch consented to perform the act of coronation. An example of this is the case of Anastasios I, a warm supporter of the Monophysites, who, at the request of the patriarch, issued a formal statement of his orthodoxy. Ostrogorsky, *History*, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Orthodoxy was not the only requirement. When Michael VIII usurped the throne from the young John Lascaris, Patriarch Arsenios openly castigated Michael's crime. The youth was blinded and sent into exile. Geanakoplos, *loc. cit.*; J. Sykoutres, «Περί το Σχίσμα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν», *Ἑλληνικά* II (1929), 257 ff. Hans-Georg Beck, «Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel», in *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist. Klasse, 1966, Heft 6, (Munich, 1966), pp. 39-40, notes 76-76a. Professor Beck has, however, noted that we must distinguish between Orthodoxy as a condition for the election and heterodoxy for the disqualification of a governing Emperor. To be sure, the Byzantine Emperor had to be Orthodox; if he was not, his legitimacy was questioned thus giving ground for his overthrow. On the other hand, Byzantine historians although they could confirm the un-Orthodoxy of their Emperor, yet his legitimacy they could not seriously challenge.

2. «There was a time when the Byzantine Church had relied on the authority of a strong secular power to give it backing in the eyes of the outside world, but now the diminishing international prestige of the Byzantine Empire had to be bolstered up by the Patriarch of Constantinople. Their roles were reversed: it was not the State which stood behind the Church but the Church which supported the State». Ostrogorsky, *History*, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

Church was the only institution to come out of the holocaust unscathed retaining intact both its leadership and organization³. Being the only surviving institution, from the outset it cooperated with those leaders who established their authority around Nicaea, Epiros and Trebizond, the three main Byzantine resistance centers.

The circumstances linked the remnants of *imperium* and *sacerdotium* in a common cause that was for both vital and essential to their survival. Indeed, the survival of the Church was always linked with the survival of the Empire, a notion that was constantly reinforced by the fears of Latinization and later of islamization⁴. Moreover, according to Byzantine constitutional theory Church and State were conceptualized as a parallel system — a dyarchy — intimately connected in the life of the *basileia*⁵. To interpret then this alliance between *imperium* and *sacerdotium* as the mere outcome of expediency alone, as has been suggested, is rather misleading⁶. Such a supposition would render the Church as a mere tool in the hands of ambitious and even unscrupulous leaders — in this case the Angeloi and the Lascaris. Furthermore, it would render the ecclesiastical rift of this period between the hierarchy of Nicaea and Epiros as an insignificant event which was dictated by the tastes of their respective secular leadership⁷.

3. Despite the Latin domination, Greek ecclesiastical authorities continued functioning. The administration of justice, for instance, was in the hands of the Greek clergy. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, *op. cit.*, cols. 447-462; M. Drinov, «O neckotorikh trydakh Dimitrija Khomatiana, kak istoricheskomo materialie», *Vizantiiski Vremennik* II (1895), 1-23.

4. Paul J. Alexander, «The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes», *Speculum* XXXVII (1962), 341ff.

5. The Byzantine canonist Theodore Balsamon defined the relationship between Church and State as follows: «ὅτι δὲ τῶν μὲν αὐτοκρατόρων ἡ ἀρωγὴ πρὸς φωτισμὸν καὶ σύστασιν ἐπετείνεται ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος, τὸ δὲ μεγαλεῖον τῶν πατριαρχῶν εἰς μόνην ψυχικὴν ἐστεναχώρηται λυσιτέλειαν ὀλίγη γὰρ τούτοις ἐστὶ φροντίς εὐπαθείας σωματικῆς», from his *Μελέται ἤτοι Ἀποκρίσεις*, in PG 138: col., 1017D. Similarly «Τῆς πολιτείας... τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ἀναγκαϊότατα μέρη Βασιλεὺς ἐστὶ καὶ Πατριάρχης», Rhalles-Potles, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 429; Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium*, (Oxford, 1957), p. 12.

6. Gardner, however, maintained that the clergy was used by its secular leadership: «The ecclesiastical face of the dispute is perhaps partly to be attributed to the fact that the clergy were generally used by the secular rulers in drawing up their instructions...» *op. cit.*, p. 127.

7. Gardner considered the ecclesiastical rift indeed insignificant: «The

To be sure, the role of the secular precedents in the ecclesiastical rift between the two states is all prevailing and important. In fact, the political considerations precipitated the ecclesiastical. Yet, the voluntary subordination of the hierarchy to the respective policies of the Angeloi and the Lascarids cannot be attributed to political considerations alone. Admittedly, the political factors were the ones to initiate the controversy. Yet, the Church would have never been drawn into such a controversy for purely political reasons alone, especially when both rulers were Orthodox and any moral or ethical considerations were out of the question. What is more, to attribute its involvement to mere obedience and servitude would be contrary both to its tradition and character contradicting also its record as a self governed body concerned with the spiritual life of the Byzantine commonwealth. What was then the hierarchy's justification for entering into a controversy which threatened the unity of the Church to the extent of bringing about a schism?

The Church had always been an integral part of the Empire and as such it formed with the Emperor an amicable dyarchy⁸. After 1204 the leadership of the Church was splintered and partitioned as a result of the Empire's dismemberment. In due time when Nicaea and Epiros presented to the Church and the world their respective claimants to the *imperium* this involuntary division became even more accentuated especially when their political and ecclesiastical interests came into conflict. The hierarchy's involvement was inevitable. Its participation in supporting the policies of their secular leadership was inherent in Byzantine tradition and in the nature of the relationship between Church and State⁹. In proclaiming their support for Theodore Angelos

whole ecclesiastical controversy may seem hardly worth the attention we have bestowed upon it. . . , *ibid.*, p. 135.

8. «The greatest blessing of mankind are the gifts of God which have been granted us by the mercy on high - the priesthood and the imperial authority. The priesthood ministers to things divine: the imperial authority is set over and shows diligence in things human; but both proceed from one and the same source and both adorn the life of man». From the preface to *Novella VI* of Justinian, cited and translated by Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

9. The hierarchy's involvement was inevitable because (i) in the Byzantine view, the Emperor as God's viceroy was entrusted with the maintenance of peace, the preservation of law and with the task of Christianizing

and their ecclesiastical autonomy from the Nicene based Patriarch, the Epirote hierarchy not only endorsed the policies of their ruler as claimant to the Byzantine throne but also expressed what was a common belief: that as long as Constantinople was in captivity and the Greeks were divided among themselves the *imperium* could be claimed by anyone until the moment Constantinople was liberated¹⁰.

In asserting this notion, the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Epiros also put in question the legitimacy of the patriarch who was temporarily residing in Nicaea. Indeed, there had been several leaders who had objected to his residing in Nicaea¹¹ but their objections soon faded out as almost everybody readily recognized the patriarch's spiritual authority over the Orthodox Church. The only ones who invariably continued to question the re-establishment of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in Nicaea were the Comnenoi in Trebizond and the Angeloi in Epiros. In doing so, they were attacking the Lascarids under whose patronage the patriarchate was established and also the hierarchy of the Church for recognizing them as the legitimate heirs to the Byzantine throne. However, these objections were voiced long before Nicaea and Epiros were openly involved in a controversy.

the «barbarians»; (ii) the Church and the Emperor shared a common goal in the divine plan of history; (iii) the Empire, that is the Church and the State, was «the eye of the Christian faith». As such, any attack against the Empire was considered also an attack against the preaching of Christ's mystery. For an elaboration of these ideas, see Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-355; Franz Dölger, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt*, (Ettal, 1953), p. 141ff; Gerhart Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 107ff.

10. Shortly after Michael Angelos was proclaimed King in Thessalonica, Apocaucos wrote him that with God's help he should soon enter triumphantly Constantinople. There he will be crowned Emperor: «Καὶ ὡς τοῦ εὐχὴν ἐπαναλαβεῖν, δώῃ σοι Κύριος πάντα τὰ αἰτήματα τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν βουλὴν σου πληρῶσαι· ἃ εἰσιν . . . πάντα συμπατῆσαι ἐχθρόν καὶ γῆν πατῆσαι τῆς Κωνσταντίνου καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἐκεῖσε βασιλείοις αὐλήν. Ἀκόλουθον δὲ τῷ πατῆματι τούτῳ καὶ ἡ ἐπὶ θρόνου τοῦ βασιλικοῦ κάθις καὶ ὅσα τῇ καταστάσει ταύτῃ ἐπόμενα». in V. G. Vasiljevski, «Epirotica saeculi XIII», *Vizantiiski Vremennik*, III, (1896) 288. Thereafter cited as *Epirotica*.

11. Nicephoros Blemmydes, *Curriculum Vitae*, ed. August Heisenberg, (Leipzig, 1896) pp. 6-7: «τῆς Κωνσταντίνου ἢ τοῦ Βύζαντος ἐκπεπορημένης ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰταλῶν ἐν τῇ Βιθυνῶν μητροπόλει καὶ ὁ πατριαρχικὸς μετετέθειτο θρόνος ὡς ἐπηλύς, ὡς ἐπίθετος . . .»

The first to challenge the sovereignty of the Lascarids and the patriarch's spiritual authority was David Comnenos, the ruler of Trebizond. From the outset, he refused to submit his ecclesiastics to the jurisdiction of the patriarch, or to recognize his episcopal appointments for the vacant sees of his territories arguing that he could not accept them because these elections took place and were ratified outside his state¹². Thus he expelled the newly elected bishop of Amastris, Pammakaristes, and the bishops appointed by the patriarch to the sees of Bosphoros, Cherson and Sougdouphoulon¹³. As a result of this policy, the hierarchy of Trebizond had to resort to episcopal ordinations without the knowledge or the consent of the patriarch. Naturally, this was contrary to canon law and the tradition of the Church.

As a matter of fact, episcopal appointments were usually decided by the patriarch himself and his standing synod¹⁴. Provincial synods could also elect bishops to fill vacant episco-

12. «Ὁ δὲ Κομνηνὸς ἐκεῖνος κύρ Δαυίδ οὐ μάστιξιν ἤκισατο καὶ ἀπεπέμψατο τὸν τῆς ἐκκλησίας διάκονον ἐκεῖνον τὸν Παμμάκαριστήν, ὅτι ψηφισθεὶς ἐν Ἀμαστρίδι ἀνέπλευσεν ἐν αὐτῇ, ὡς περισκοπῆσαι τὰ κατ' αὐτὴν.» *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 275.

13. *ibid.* p. 275 and No. 26, p. 290.

14. The election of bishops was usually decided by a collegiate body formed by the members of the nobility of the city, the lower clergy and the people in addition to the bishops of the province. There were at least three candidates among whom the bishop was to be elected. The permanent synod —σύνδος ἐνδημοῦσα— was entitled to elect metropolitans or archbishops. The provincial synod —ἐπαρχιακὴ σύνδος— usually elected bishops for the vacant sees of the provinces. During the election, the bishops had to convene a synod to cast their ballots. If they could not come they should send at least their votes: IV canon of I Ecumenical council, Rhalles-Potles, *op. cit.* II, p. 122, 264; P. Joseph Hajjar, «Le Synode Permanent dans l'Eglise Byzantine des Origines au XI^e siècle» in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, CLXIV (1962) 140-144. D. M. Nicol observed that «The appointment of bishops in Greece was a matter for the Patriarch and the Emperor. The Synod over which Apocaucos presided was only authorized to elect bishops from among the candidates nominated by the Emperor himself». *op. cit.*, p. 79. Although in substance Nicol's observation is correct— indeed, the secular leadership of the two Greek states was overly concerned with the problem of the episcopal elections— his statement per se is incorrect. According to the III canon of the II Ecumenical council and canon XXX of the Holy Apostles, in Rhalles-Potles, *op. cit.*, p. 564 and p. 37, bishops could not be elected through the will of the secular leaders.

pates as long as they had the patriarch's approval¹⁵. However, metropolitans, archbishops and the more prominent bishops were elected by the patriarch himself and the standing synod.

Naturally, after 1204, communications between the clergy and the patriarchate were often difficult if not impossible because of the Latin occupation. As a result, the provincial synods began to elevate bishops to vacant sees without asking for the patriarch's approval. Obviously these appointments were made κατ' οἰκονομίαν¹⁶ and in several instances were later ratified by the patriarch himself. There were also cases when uncanonical ordinations took place despite the clergy's resistance and lack of cooperation with its political leaders. At least this was the case with the episcopal elections in Trebizond¹⁷. The problem, however, of the episcopal appointments there, was soon settled because the clergy under the leadership of the bishop of Trebizond refused to obey the ecclesiastical policies of its ruler, David Comnenos. Left without the support of his clergy Comnenos decided to give up his plans for an autonomous Trapezuntine Church¹⁸.

Whereas the clergy of Trebizond opposed the ecclesiastical policies of its ruler for the sake of maintaining communion with the Constantinopolitan Patriarch, the Epirote hierarchy preferred to jeopardize its communion with the patriarchate in order to gain its autonomy. Like David Comnenos, Michael Angelos and later his brother Theodore wanted to establish within their independent state an autonomous Church that would be controlled by a synod composed of high ranking ecclesiastics. The synod, in turn, would constitute the highest ecclesiastical authority over their domains¹⁹.

15. Canon XIX of Antioch, in Rhalles-Potles, *op. cit.* pp. 160-161; XII of Laodicea, *ibid.*, p. 182.

16. According to the Byzantine concept of *economia*, in cases of extreme severity, the canons of the Church could be relaxed but not at the expense of dogma: «τότε τὰς οἰκονομίας ὁ ὁρθὸς λόγος μεταχειρίζεται ὅτε τὸ δόγμα τῆς εὐσεβείας οὐδὲν παραβλάπτεται» cited in Photios' *Bibliotheca*, PG 103: col. 953; also H. Alivizatos, «Ἡ Οἰκονομία κατὰ τὸ κανονικὸν δίκαιον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας», (Athens, 1949), p. 68.

17. Heinrich Gelzer, *Geistliches und weltliches aus dem Türkischen Orient*, (Leipzig, 1900) p. 87; N. Tomadakes, «Τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ κράτη τῆς Φραγκοκρατίας», in *Σύλλαβος*, *op. cit.*, p. 59ff.

18. *ibid.*

19. See chapter II, p. 41 ff.

The Epirote rulers feared that if their ecclesiastics were allowed to recognize the Patriarch's jurisdictional authority, in time they would also recognize the Lascarids as their legitimate rulers. This was inevitable because the patriarch exercised his authority under the influence of the Lascarids. Moreover, if they submitted their episcopal nominations to the patriarch it would be impossible to veto his appointments. The patriarch then would be free to nominate in their own territories men of his own choice and for that matter of the Lascarids.

Moved by these considerations, Michael Angelos began to initiate an ecclesiastical policy of self determination. The first uncanonical episcopal ordinations in Epiros took place during the last years of his rule. At Michael's insistence, the Synod of the Epirote bishops elected to the metropolitan see of Dyrrachium a certain Dokeianos and to the episcopate of Larissa a certain Calospetes²⁰. These elections took place in Arta (1213) where the Synod convened under the leadership of John Apocaukos the Metropolitan of Naupaktos. Dokeianos was ordained to his office by a synod composed of his suffragan bishop and Calospetes by the bishop of Leucas²¹.

As the patriarch was not informed or consulted on the matter, their ordinations were uncanonical and invalid. Therefore sometime after they were elected to office, Michael Angelos submitted to the patriarch the nomination of his bishops requesting his approval and also the ratification of their appointment²². Michael maybe took this step alone or at the insistence of his clergy. Perhaps it was Apocaukos who influenced his decision. Apocaukos was a conservative ecclesiastic who always strove for some kind of rapprochement between Nicaea and Epiros²³.

20. *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 270; Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, p. 103 has incorrectly stated that Apocaukos appointed Dokeianos to the bishopric of Dyrrachium.

21. For a detailed study of these appointments see also the study of N. Bees, «Λέων-Μανουήλ Μακρός, ἐπίσκοπος Βελλᾶς...» *Ἐπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, II (1925), 122-148, esp. 133ff.

22. Patriarch Manuel wrote to Apocaukos about Michael's petition: «ἔνθεν τοι καὶ ἀναφορὰν ἔθεσθε διὰ τοῦ μακαρίτου ἐκείνου Κομνηνοῦ Κῦρ Μιχαήλ, δέσμενοι συγνώμης... καὶ δεχθῆναι καὶ τοὺς, ὡς εἴρηται, ἀκανονίστως χειροτονηκότας δύο ἀρχιερεῖς». *ibid.*, No. 16, p. 268. This letter is dated in February 1222; Bees, *op. cit.*, p. 133; Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

23. Matthias Wellenhofer, *Johannes Apocaukos, Metropolit von Naupaktos*

Be that as it may, the recognition of the patriarch's jurisdictional authority over Epiros further indicates that Michael indeed never had any serious intentions of claiming the *imperium* even though he had ruled in Epiros as a monarch²⁴. However, Michael's petition was not granted during his lifetime because the Patriarchs Theodore II Eirinikos (1214 - 1216) and later Maximos II (1216) preferred to ignore the matter completely²⁵. The petition, in fact, remained unanswered for several years until the patriarchal throne was occupied by Manuel I (1217 - 1222) who decided to convene a synod to settle the matter once and for all²⁶. In February 1222, Manuel issued a decree stating that he would no longer tolerate uncanonical ordinations because the appointment of bishops with disregard to canonical procedure was a threat to the unity of the Church. «However our mediocrity», said the patriarch, «moved by brotherly love and wishing to see the beautiful and undefiled body of the Church no longer divided, after you have begged forgiveness, we decided to issue along with the brethren a synodal act ratifying your request. However, we warn you that the repetition of uncanonical ordinations will bear the consequences of the canons of the Church both against the ordaining bishop and the ordained»²⁷.

The ecclesiastical developments that were taking place in Epiros had obviously created some sensation in Nicaea. To forestall any further problems, the patriarch had issued this decree and had sent Constantine Aulenos as his envoy²⁸. The patriarch had also instructed Aulenos to confront the hierarchy of Epiros with the problem of episcopal elections and to discuss the matter with John Apocaukos and Theodore Angelos, who had in the mean-

in *Aetolien*, (Freising, 1913) p. 60ff; N. Tomadakes, «Οἱ Λόγιοι τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου» *op. cit.*, pp. 12ff, 19ff; H.-G. Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 708f.

24. see chapter II, p. 37.

25. *Epirotica*, No. 16, p. 268: «ἔμενε δὲ ἡ τοιαύτη ἀναφορὰ τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ μέχρις ἡμῶν μηδεμιᾶς ἀξιουμένη τῆς ἀποκρίσεως, οἷα δὲ ἐκείνου καὶ τῶν μετ' ἐκείνου πατριαρχῶν δυσχερανάντων, οἶμαι, πρὸς τὸ τοῦ πράγματος τολμηρόν».

26. Patriarch Manuel described the Synod in his letter to Apocaukos: «Ἄλλ' ἡ μετριότης ἡμῶν... μηδαμῶς ἀνεχομένη τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἁμῶν σῶμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὅπως οὖν διασπώμενον παρορᾶν, οὐκ ὀλίγους καὶ ἄλλους συναγαγοῦσα τῶν ἀδελφῶν... συνοδικὴν ἐξέθετο πράξιν...» *ibid.* Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1227, pp. 32-33.

27. *ibid.*

28. *ibid.* Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1228, p. 33.

time succeeded his brother Michael (d. 1215). Furthermore, he was to implement the patriarchal decree.

Although there were no prospects in sight for reaching an understanding with the Epirote clergy, the patriarch invited in 1219 Theodore Angelos and John Apocaukos to send a delegation to Nicaea ^{28a}. A council of Greek and Latin ecclesiastics was scheduled to meet there on Easter Sunday, 1220, to discuss the problem of the union of the Churches ²⁹. Invitations were also extended to the Orthodox Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. In his invitation, the patriarch addressed Apocaukos as the leading spokesman of the Epirote clergy and referred to Theodore Angelos as «πανευγενέστατον κατὰ πνεῦμα υἱὸν αὐτοῦ» ³⁰.

The idea of calling a council in Nicaea was actually instigated by Theodore Lascaris and not by the Orthodox Church ³¹. Realizing that such an undertaking would only further the Nicene interests, Theodore Angelos and his ecclesiastics immediately rejected the proposal as insulting ³². Coming to terms with the enemies of the Greek people, said Apocaukos, while the rest of Hellas suffered under the Latin yoke was like committing treason ³³.

28a. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 86. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1222, p. 29.

29. The text of the invitation is contained in *Epirotica*, No. 14, p. 264: «κοινῇ βουλῇ καὶ ψήφῳ πρέσβεις πρὸς τὸν πάπαν τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης σταλῆναι χάριν τοῦ λυθῆναι τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλας εἰρηνεῦσαι τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ ὁμοφρονῆσαι τοῦ λοιποῦ πάντας Χριστιανοὺς». Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1224, pp. 30-31.

30. *ibid.*

31. This becomes clear from the text of the invitation: «ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ὁ κράτιστος καὶ ἅγιος αὐτοκράτωρ μου πρὸς εὐκίνητον ἦλθε βουλὴν τοῦ συναγαγεῖν εἰς Νίκαιαν τοὺς ἀπανταχόθι ἀρχιερεῖς...» *ibid.*

32. Theodore Lascaris had designs of securing the succession to the throne of Constantinople by marrying Yolanda the daughter of the Latin Empress. Acr. p. 27.1; p. 31. 1. To achieve his goal, he planned to enter into negotiations with Rome. Norden, *op. cit.*, p. 343ff. Patriarch Manuel did not approve of Theodore's marriage, «ἐνθεν τοι καὶ ἔρις ἐκ τοῦ τότε πατριαρχοῦντος Μανουὴλ τῷ βασιλεῖ ξυμβεβήκει, μηδ' ὅλως τῇ τοιαύτῃ ἀθεσμογαμίᾳ συγκατανεύοντος». Acr. p. 31. 7-9. Apocaukos indignantly added: «ἐθαύμασα, οὕτως ὑμῶν διὰ τοῦ μετὰ τῶν Λατίνων κήδους προστεθέντων αὐτοῖς καὶ σπονδὰς πρὸς αὐτοὺς ποιησαμένων εἰρηνικὰς καὶ τὸ σύμπνουν ἔχόντων, ὡς ἀποθαρρῆσαι αὐτοὺς τοῦ λοιποῦ καὶ κλεῖσαι μὲν τὰς ἡμετέρας ἐκκλησίας, ἐνθα καὶ ἄρχουσι, μυρία δὲ δεινὰ κατὰ τῶν ὑπὸ χεῖρα Χριστιανῶν διαπράττεσθαι, νῦν ἐθέλεις πρεσβείαν στείλασθαι πρὸς τὸν τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης ἐξάρχοντα». *Epirotica*, No. 15, p. 266.

33. *Epirotica*, No. 15, p. 267. lines 10-16.

The task of answering the patriarch's invitation was entrusted to Apocaukos ³⁴. Apocaukos argued that similar attempts for union had been tried but failed even though the circumstances were by far better than the present. Such an attempt, however, given the circumstances would only benefit the Latins and their oppressive rule. On the other hand, if there was going to be a synod it should be held in Epiros because their clergy could not travel to Nicaea without risking their lives. On the contrary, the Nicene ecclesiastics were already in good terms with the Latins and could travel safely even to Rome ³⁵. Apocaukos was convinced that union with Rome at that time was not to the interests of Orthodoxy. The patriarch therefore should find an excuse to postpone the plans for the meeting. The Epirote clergy would not participate in the synod but instead would continue to support their ruler and his victorious struggle against the Latins ³⁶. Apocaukos then concluded: «If Theodore Comnenos Angelos has accomplished so much and his fame has spread everywhere, how much more could be accomplished if in the name of God Theodore Lascaris and Theodore Angelos would unite and support each other» ³⁷.

In essence, the arguments of Apocaukos were quite valid. Also, his sincerity can hardly be doubted. Indeed, a union with the Latins would only benefit Rome and the political interests of Nicaea. However, his indignation towards the hierarchy of Nicaea for entertaining the idea of union as well as his emphasis on the Epirote patriotism is hardly convincing. Had Apocaukos forgotten that a few years earlier, Michael Angelos for similar reasons had placed himself and his clergy under the protection of Rome recognizing the Pope's spiritual authority over his domains? ³⁸.

In the opening paragraph of his letter to Manuel, Apocaukos

34. *ibid.* No. 15, pp. 265-267. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

35. *ibid.*, p. 266, lines 26-30.

36. *ibid.*, p. 267, lines 16-31.

37. *ibid.*, lines 29-31.

38. For an account of Michael's negotiations with Rome, see Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-59. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 26. Also Theodore had placed his state under the protection of Rome in 1218; for details see Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

observed that the patriarch had not announced his elevation to office to the Epirote clergy as it was customary. Perhaps his omission to write them, he sarcastically added, was indicative of the Patriarch's superiority over them³⁹. But Apocaukos' bitterness is more apparent than real. He seems to have capitalized on the breakdown of communications between the Nicene and the Helladic clergies by intentionally accentuating their respective differences. In the event that the patriarch would go ahead with his plans of union, Apocaukos threatened to sever communion with them retaining a nominal fellowship but only for the sake of spiritual unity⁴⁰.

And there was good reason why Apocaukos and Theodore Angelos adopted such an uncompromising attitude. Politically Epiros was on the road to success, its armies drawing closer and closer to Thessalonica⁴¹. Theodore Angelos had scored some brilliant victories and therefore had no intention of coming to terms with the Latins. His victories and the rapid expansion of his state had also convinced him to further the ecclesiastical plans of his brother Michael by establishing in Epiros an autonomous Church. That this was the case is further evinced by the fruitless mission of Constantine Aulenos.

Upon his arrival in Bonitza, Aulenos met with Theodore Angelos and Apocaukos, but it did not take him too long to discover that Epiros was not going to accept episcopal appointments any longer from Nicaea⁴². At the suggestion of Theodore Angelos, they had already proceeded to fill their vacancies with their own candidates. The most important ecclesiastical posts were already occupied by bishops without the knowledge of the

39. *Epirotica*, No. 15, p. 265: «ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐν ὑψηλοῖς κατοικῶν καὶ θρόνου καὶ τοπικῆς θέσεως· ὑψηλότερα γὰρ τὰ ἑῷα τῶν δυτικῶν· ἐπὶ τοὺς ταπεινοὺς ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν διὰ γραφῶν οὐκ ἤξιωσας...»

40. *ibid.*, p. 267.

41. In 1217, Theodore defeated and took into captivity the Latin Emperor of Constantinople Peter Courtenay near Elbassan. *Acr.*, p. 25.13-17. By 1219 he had added to his territories Neopatras, Prosek and Platamona. Hearing of their capitulation to Theodore, Apocaukos, on each occasion, composed a panegyric. *Epirotica*, No. 2, p. 243: «τὴν ἐκκλησίαν Νέων Πατρῶν, ἣν ἡ σὴ κραταιὰ χεὶρ Ἰταλικῆς χειρὸς ἠλευθέρωσε». No. 3, p. 245 and also p. 247: «...πρὸς πέτραν οὗτος ὁ Πλαταμών, ὅτι καὶ πετρώδης ὁ χώρος... εἰς ἀλίσια δὲ ὁ μεγαλοεργὸς ἐμὸς Κομνηνός, τῆς πέτρας ταύτης ὑπερκαθήμενος».

42. *Epirotica*, No. 16, p. 268. Nicol, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

patriarch⁴³. Moreover, the implementor of Theodore Angelos' ecclesiastical policies was John Apocaukos, the Metropolitan of Naupactos.

Prior to his coming to Epiros, Apocaukos had studied philosophy and theology in Constantinople together with Manuel Sarantenos, the future Constantinopolitan Patriarch, under the same teacher, a certain Psellos⁴⁴. His ecclesiastical career began by serving at first as a deacon in the metropolitan see of Naupactos near his uncle Manasses⁴⁵ and later as a patriarchal scribe — ὑπογραφεύς — in Constantinople⁴⁶. There, he gained great

43. Demetrios Chomatianos was raised to the vacant archbishopric of Achrida (ca 1217-1218). Meliarakes has mistakenly stated that Chomatianos was elected and ordained by Apocaukos. *op. cit.*, p. 191. From the following, however, it becomes clear that he was elected by his suffragan bishops: «ἐπιλέλεκται μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ τῆς τούτου ἐξουσίας ὁ Βουλγαρίας, χειροτονηται δὲ παρὰ τῆς ὑπ' αὐτὸν συνόδου κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν συνήθειαν». *ibid.*, No. 17, pp. 272-273. George Bardanes in October 1219 was unanimously elected to the see of Corfu, *ibid.*, No. 13, p. 260ff. Symeon was ordained bishop of Thaumacou, Costomyres to the see of Neon Patron and Gorianites to Serres, *ibid.*, No. 17, p. 276.

Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, p. 188, mistakenly believed that Bardanes succeeded Basil Padiadites to the see of Corfu. From a letter of Theodore Angelos to Apocaukos it becomes clear that Bardanes did not succeed Padiadites but a certain Samson: «ἐκεῖνος [ὁ Πεδιαδίτης] μὲν οὖν προαπῆλθε βίου τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου, θρόνον δὲ αὐτοῦ ἕτερος διεδέξατο...» *ibid.*, No. 7, p. 252. On Chomatianos, see H.-G. Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 708-710; on Bardanes, *ibid.*, p. 668f.

44. Apocaukos wrote to the Patriarch: «...μεμνημένοι μὲν καὶ πολλῶν ἐτέρων συνουσιῶν μετὰ τῆς σῆς ἀγιότητος, ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ τῆς κοινωνίας τῶν αὐτῶν παιδευμάτων, ὅτε τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἡὔγει ὁ λύχνος, καὶ σὺ καὶ ἡμεῖς τῷ φιλοσόφῳ ἐκείνῳ ἐμαθητεύομεν τῷ Ψελλῷ». *Epirotica*, No. 15, p. 265. Also in a letter of his to Chomatianos, Apocaukos described his theological studies in Constantinople: «'Αλλ' ὅτε τῆς Κωνσταντίνου ἡὔγει ὁ λύχνος καὶ τὸ σεβαστὸν τῆς Σοφίας μέγα τέμενος ἡὔγαζε, περὶ χοροῦς φιλοσόφων, περὶ ρητόρων ῥυλλογὰς ἐστρεφόμεθα...» published by Papadopoulos-Kerameus, «Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν Ἱστορίαν τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀχρίδος» in *Sbornik Statei V. I. Lamanskou*, (Petersburg, 1907), 248. Wellnhofer, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Parthenios Polakes, «Ἱωάννης Ἀπόκαυκος, Μητροπολίτης Ναυπάκτου», *Νέα Σιών*, XVIII, (1923) 146.

45. «...ἡνίκα νεάζων μὲν ἦν ἐν διακόνις ἐγώ, ὑπεδρήστευσεν δὲ ἐν γραφαῖς τῷ θεῷ μου ἐκείνῳ τῷ Ναυπάκτου, τῷ Μανασσῇ». A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, «Κερκυραϊκά», in *Vizantiiski Vremennik*, XIII (1906) 351. Manasses was identified by Bees with the author Constantine Manasses: N. A. Bees, «Manassis, der Metropolit von Naupaktos, ist identisch mit dem Schriftsteller Konstantinos Manassis», *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* VII (1930), pp. 119-130.

46. Apocaukos served as ὑπογραφεύς under the Patriarch Basil Ca-

reputation for both his piety and erudition. His surviving correspondence and writings amply attest to his vast learning and skills as an accomplished canonist, philologist and orator. He retained the post of *ἐπογραφεὺς* until 1202, when he was elevated by the patriarch to the metropolitan see of Naupactos⁴⁷.

The Epirote synod found in Apocaucos its leading spokesman. On the other hand, the Angeloi entrusted him with their plans of establishing a Church independent from the jurisdiction of the Nicene-based Patriarch. Apocaucos was willing to help but not at the expense of severing completely communion with the clergy of Nicaea and Constantinople. He worked hard to materialize these aspirations but at times mistrust and misunderstanding kept him aloof from the Angeloi⁴⁸. When the occasion arose to fill the vacant sees of Theodore Angelos' newly conquered territories Apocaucos readily complied, to be sure, at the expense of canonical procedure, approving the appointments of bishops that Theodore had himself suggested. Thus, Symeon was elected bishop of Thaumacou, Costomyres to the see of Neopatras and Gorianites to the bishopric of Serres⁴⁹. Also, at Theodore's

materos (1183-1187), George Xiphilinos (ca 1191) and John Camateros (1199-1206). See also A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Κερκυραϊκά*, *op. cit.*, pp. 346-347. Polakes, *op. cit.*, p. 147; Wellnhofer, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

47. Naupactos was elevated to metropolitan status in the turn of the century (ca 901-907) replacing Nicopolis, the capital of the theme. For a detailed study of Naupactos as an ecclesiastical and political center in Epiros, see the study of Gerasimos Konidares «Πότε παρήκμασε καὶ ἐξέλιπε καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῶς ὡς μητρόπολις ἡ Νικόπολις καὶ ἀνεδείχθη ἡ Ναύπακτος», *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Θ' Διεθνoῦς Βυζαντινολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου*, (Athens, 1956), vol. II, pp. 150-205, esp. 155-186. Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, pp. 144, 188 maintained that Apocaucos was metropolitan of both Naupactos and Arta. However, Arta had its own bishop and with the bishoprics of Aetos, Acheloos, Bonitza, Ioannina, Bellas, Bouthrotos, Dryinoupolis, Photikes and Chimaras comprised the metropolitan see of Naupactos. The joining of which Meliarakes spoke of took place in the fourteenth century. Wellnhofer *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

48. Apocaucos quarrelled with the despot Constantine Angelos, Theodore's brother, because he imposed heavy taxes on the Church of Naupactos, demanding the sum of one thousand *hyperpera*, -gold coins. For the details of the conflict, see the correspondence of Apocaucos with Chomatianos, in A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Συμβολή*, *op. cit.* pp. 239-250. Also, Wellnhofer, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-23; Tomadakes, «Οἱ λόγοι τοῦ δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου», *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16; Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

49. *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 276.

suggestion, the vacant see of Achrida and Justiniana Prima passed to Demetrios Chomatianos (ca 1217 - 1218), a nomination approved by everybody including Apocaucos⁵⁰. When the Metropolis of Corfu was reported vacant, Theodore commissioned Apocaucos to convene in Arta a synod (October 15, 1219), in order to elect a new bishop for the island. Theodore, however, made it clear to Apocaucos that he would personally favor for this office George Bardanes, the protégé of the Metropolitan of Athens, Michael Choniates⁵¹. Bardanes was duly elected and ordained in Arta by a synod of bishops, under the patronage of Apocaucos, in December of 1219⁵².

When the synod convened in Arta to elect Bardanes it was unanimously decided to issue also a *synodicon* stating the reasons for ratifying his election⁵³. Out of concern for his pupil, Michael Choniates in a letter to Apocaucos had stressed the importance of following canonical procedure in Bardanes' election⁵⁴.

50. *ibid.*, pp. 272-273.

51. In September 1219, Theodore Angelos wrote to Apocaucos about his preference for Bardanes: «Σύνελθε οὖν, ὃ σεβασμία μοι κεφαλὴ... εἰς τὴν ὑφ' ὑμᾶς χώραν τὴν Ἀρταν... καὶ καθίσαντες τὸν οὐκ ἀδόκιμον προχειρίσασθε... συνεισφέρω βουλὴν παρ' ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' οὐ τυραννικὴν, ὅτι τέως ἐμοὶ πρόσφορος παρὰ τῇ τοιαύτῃ ψήφῳ λελόγισται ὁ ἐντιμότατος χαρτοφύλαξ Ἀθηνῶν καὶ ἡμῶν ἀγαπώμενος ὁ Βαρδάνης...» *Epirotica*, No. 7, p. 252.

Meliarakes thought that Bardanes was a Greek from Egypt, *op. cit.*, p. 199, n. 2. He arrived at this supposition misinterpreting a letter of Choniates to Bardanes: Lampros, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 228. lines 14-19. This view was later repeated by Lagopates, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

For more details on the life of Bardanes and the controversy surrounding his identity as Metropolitan of Corfu —another disputed point— and his contacts with the Latins especially Nicholas-Nectarios of Otranto, see the excellent study of Johannes M. Hoeck and Raimund J. Leonertz; «Nikolaos-Nektarios von Otranto Abt von Casole», in the series of *Studia Patristica et Byzantina*, XI (1965), pp. 117-122.

52. *Epirotica*, No. 13, pp. 260-263.

53. *ibid.*

54. Michael Choniates, at first, had introduced his pupil Bardanes to the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Manuel Sarantenos (ca 1217). Bardanes visited him in Nicaea but left the city the same year to place himself under the patronage of Theodore Angelos. Michael Choniates followed with concern his pupil's career and when the time arrived for Bardanes to be elected to the see of Corfu, Choniates cautioned Apocaucos to follow canonical procedure: «ἀξιῶ γοῦν καὶ αὐτὸς τὴν ἀγιοσύνην σου ὡς ἂν ἐμὴν χάριν καὶ εἰς τὸν

But the *synodicon* was not issued for Bardanes' case only. The synod wished to justify the ecclesiastical policies of Theodore Angelos and to inform the patriarch and his hierarchy in Nicaea of their future policy⁵⁵.

The election of Bardanes had the approval of their ruler, Theodore Angelos and of Michael Choniates the Metropolitan of Athens⁵⁶. By ordaining Bardanes, they had no intention of violating the jurisdictional rights of the patriarch. The circumstances, they said, demanded a pious and capable spiritual leader to take over the vacant metropolitan see of Corfu⁵⁷. Indeed, the Orthodox population of the island due to the geographical location of their home — situated between Italy and Epiros — was constantly threatened by the impious doctrines of the Latins⁵⁸. The purity of their faith was in danger. It was necessary then to act in the spirit of *economia*, as Saint Paul the Apostle had himself given the example, adapting themselves to the circumstances and the exigencies of the times⁵⁹. Their choice fell to Bardanes because his virtues and piety were testified by everyone making him the best candidate for this post⁶⁰.

The *synodicon* was probably written by Apocaucos himself. This document was the first of its kind to contain the thoughts of the convened bishops on the problem of the patriarch's jurisdictional authority over their independent state. Of the other

τοιοῦτον κατανέυσης ὁλοσχερῶς διὰ τὴν τοῦ μεγαλοῦργου Δούκα θέλησιν· ἀγαθὸν γὰρ θέλημα ἔχει... εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ χειροθεσίαν...» *Epirotica*, No. 9, pp. 254-255.

55. *Epirotica*, No. 13, pp. 260-263.

56. *ibid.*, p. 261 «καὶ ἀπὸ ἐγγράφου ἐπιτροπῆς τοῦ παρ' ἡμῖν κρατοῦντος μεγάλου Κομνηνοῦ κῦρ Θεοδώρου τοῦ Δούκα καὶ δῆτα, καὶ ἀπὸ γραφῆς τοῦ παναγιωτάτου Ἀθηνῶν... Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Χωνιάτου». The synod mentioned Choniates in order to add validity to their ordinations. Choniates, however, although overly concerned with his pupil's ordination, kept neutral in all other matters. He referred to Theodore with respect but refrained from committing himself to his cause of gaining ecclesiastical independence from the patriarchate. See also Lampros, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 281-282; 330-332; 332-333; 350-351, containing his correspondence with Apocaucos.

57. *ibid.*, lines 34-36.

58. *ibid.*, p. 262. 2-6.

59. *ibid.*, lines 11-15.

60. *ibid.*, p. 263 «... τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον, ὡς τὸν ἀπὸ μυριάδων ἐκλελοχισμένον ἀπολεξάμενοι, εἰς τὴν τῶν Κερκυραίων προὔβαλλόμεθα, οὕτω τῶν πραγμάτων, οὕτω τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας οὕτως ἀπαιτησάντων».

episcopal nominations that had taken place in Epiros almost simultaneously with Bardanes' election, they said nothing. But it was obvious that they should be also justified for the exact same reasons. These appointments were necessitated by the prevailing circumstances which made it undesirable to leave a see bereft of spiritual leadership. The appointment to office of those bishops then should not be taken as a violation of the patriarchal prerogative. On the contrary, by electing to office men of piety and proven merits, they only wished to safeguard the faith from the dangers of the Latin propaganda⁶¹.

Apocaucos' role during these elections can hardly be minimized. That he closely cooperated with Theodore Angelos in the election of Demetrios Chomatianos and that he was more than willing to ordain Bardanes after his election in Arta, are facts clearly stated in his correspondence⁶². Yet D.M. Nicol maintains that Apocaucos during these elections «was obliged to applaud the wisdom of his ruler with one hand while allaying the doubts of his Patriarch with the other»⁶³, suggesting that Apocaucos was more cautious than ever and not in complete agreement with Theodore's policies⁶⁴ as in the case of Costomyres' appointment, in the newly recovered diocese of Neopatras⁶⁵. However, in the light of the sources, D.M. Nicol's suppositions are quite unacceptable. The sources clearly state that Costomyres owed his appointment to Apocaucos. Furthermore, they state that Apocaucos introduced him to Theodore Angelos as a candidate for the vacant

61. *ibid.*, «Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἓνα καὶ πρῶτον εἰδότες σκοπὸν ἐπισκοπικῆς προχειρίσεως τὴν διεξαγωγὴν τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τὴν διδασκαλίαν καὶ τὴν κυβέρνησιν...»

62. Consider Apocaucos' response to the letter of Choniates in *Epirotica*, No. 10, p. 256: «Ἀὐτὰ μὲν ὠδήγησαν καὶ ἤγαγον με πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐπιπόθησιν καὶ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν ἐν ψήφῳ τῆς τῶν Κερκυρῶν αὐτοῦ ἐπεμνήσθην σὴν τε χάριν καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ τιθέμενος, νῦν δὲ καὶ χειροθεσία τελεία σαῖς εὐχαῖς τελεσθήσεται».

63. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

64. *ibid.*, p. 79; «Theodore must soon have become aware that he could not count on the whole-hearted support of John Apocaucos in the establishment of an autocephalous Church of Epiros.»

65. *ibid.*, p. 84; «... with the consent if not the approval of Apocaucos Theodore appointed one Costomyres to the newly recovered diocese of Neopatras».

see of Neopatras⁶⁶. Apocaukos would have never composed the *synodicon* or for that matter endorsed it if he was not in complete agreement with Theodore and the synod of Arta in the election of Bardanes whom he had supported himself⁶⁷. In addition, Apocaukos was entrusted with the responsibility of convening the synod in Arta⁶⁸. The *synodicon* issued there, was written by him and in effect expressed his ideas concerning the ecclesiastical relations between Nicaea and the clergy of Epiros. To depict Apocaukos' role in any other way would seem quite unjust and historically rather inaccurate.

Aulenios was sent to Epiros by Patriarch Manuel I to settle with Apocaukos and Theodore Angelos the problem of episcopal appointments⁶⁹. However, the Patriarch never received an answer. On the contrary, he learned from rumors that Calospetes, the bishop of Larissa, upon his death was succeeded by another bishop through an unauthorized election and that Demetrios Chomatianos, the autocephalous archbishop of Achrida, was responsible for many innovations that were taking place in Epiros⁷⁰. This news apparently reached the patriarch at about the same time that he received Apocaukos' answer to his invitation to attend the proposed synod for the union of the Churches.

Distressed by Apocaukos' letter, having received no word from Aulenios' mission and hearing of these rumors, Manuel ad-

66. *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 276: «...ἐν μὲν τῇ Νέᾳ Πατρᾷ ὁ τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας διάκονος πατριαρχικὸς νοτάριος καὶ διδάσκαλος τῆς γύρας ὁ Κωστομύρης προκρίνεται...» Apocaukos persuaded Theodore to accept Costomyres as a candidate to the vacant see of Neopatras: «...καὶ ὁ παρὼν [Κωστομύρης] πανυπερεντιμώτατος ἄνθρωπος, πάλαι μὲν βίου ἔχων ἀρκούντως καὶ τιμῆς καὶ περιφανείας ἐν τε βασιλείᾳ αὐλαίς ἐν τε ταῖς τοῦ πατριάρχου ἀναστροφαῖς». According to Apocaukos, Costomyres was in the immediate circle of the patriarch serving as «διδάσκαλος τῆς γύρας» *ibid.*, No. 2, p. 243.

67. *Epirotica*, No. 10, p. 256. also consider No. 12, p. 259. Apocaukos' letter to Bardanes: «συνεκέλευσε δέ μοι τὴν ἔξοδον καὶ ὁ θεσπέσιος Ἀθηνῶν, εἰς σὴν τελεσιουργίαν ἐπιταχύνων καὶ προσευχὰς ὑπὲρ ταύτης ἡμῖν εὐχόμενος».

68. *ibid.*, No. 7, pp. 252-253 contains the order of Theodore to Apocaukos to convene the synod in Arta: «Σύνελθε οὖν, ᾧ σεβασμία μοι κεφαλὴ... εἰς τὴν ὑφ' ὧμας χώραν τὴν Ἀρταν».

69. *ibid.*, No. 16, p. 268.

70. *ibid.*, pp. 268-269: «Ἄρτι γοῦν πάλιν ἐμεμαθήκαμεν, ὥς τοῦ Λαρίσσης τοῦ Καλοσπῆτου τὸν τῆδε βίον μετηλλαχότος, ἕτερος ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ μητροπόλει χειροτόνηται».

dressed to Apocaukos and to the archbishop of Gardikiou a letter, (ca February 1222), expressing his indignation for violating again canonical procedure⁷¹. Manuel reminded his readers of the dispensation he had given them earlier confirming the elections of Calospetes as bishop of Larissa and of Dokeianos as bishop of Dyrrachium with the provision that unauthorized elections should not take place again⁷². The patriarch's decisions were announced to them through Aulenios, his envoy. Yet, in spite of all his efforts, the patriarch was informed that episcopal appointments continued without his authorization.

The patriarch did not know whom to blame but he suspected Chomatianos.

If the one responsible for the situation is indeed the Archbishop of Bulgaria, I wonder, [said the patriarch], if this man will not involve us in worse things, since he seems to be unfamiliar and in many things ignorant with the discipline and practices of the Church. No wonder then why he acts with disrespect to the canons. But you should not act like him. If you do, your deeds may appear even worse than those of the barbarian Christians. But even they are better because they come to us from all over the North and even beyond that... requesting clergy canonically ordained. And we comply with their request. Our mediocrity out of leniency to you has deemed, however, to send you this letter as a remedy. You may communicate it also to others⁷³.

The patriarch's letter denounced the Epirote clergy as transgressors of the canons but it still offered them a compromise on

71. *ibid.* Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1230, pp. 34-36.

72. *ibid.*, p. 268 «...καὶ τὰς δύο ταύτας χειροτονίας κυροῦσαν, πλὴν ἀσφαλιζομένην τὸ μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ μηκέτι χώραν διδοῦσαν τὸ τοιοῦτον τι τοῦ λοιποῦ ἐν τοῖς αὐτόθι ἐνεργηθῆναι, εἰ μὴ ἄρα βούλονται καὶ οἱ χειροτονήσαντες καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ χειροτονηθέντες ὑπόδικοι εἶναι τοῖς ἐκ τῶν κανόνων ἐπιτιμίαις».

73. *ibid.* p. 269.

the condition that uncanonical practices should not be continued. The patriarch also implicated Demetrios Chomatianos making him partly responsible for the situation in Epiros. But that these problems were to a great extent the outcome of the prevailing political situation in the Balkans and Asia Minor mattered very little to him. As a follower of ecclesiastical *akribeia*⁷⁴ the patriarch was unwilling to see the problem from a different angle but only within the frame of ecclesiastical discipline. The patriarch's letter bore a waxen seal with the inscription «Manuel by the Grace of God archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch».

Apocaucos was obliged to answer. However, the patriarch's letter was not addressed to him but to the Epirote clergy in general. Apocaucos suggested to Theodore Angelos the convocation of a synod at which to discuss the patriarch's charges⁷⁵. Whether this synod ever took place cannot be established. However, the response of Apocaucos to the patriarch's letter indicates that it was composed with the approval of Theodore Angelos and of the higher clergy of Epiros.

In a long and detailed letter, Apocaucos answered one by one all of the patriarch's charges⁷⁶. Their polity, he said, was inevitably shaped by the prevailing circumstances. Consequently, their actions should be judged with leniency and in the spirit of *economia*⁷⁷. Indeed, they are forced to ordain bishops because the number of their qualified clergy is small. Apocaucos admits that his role in these ordinations is not a minor one because, he said, «almost everybody wants to be ordained by me justifying their wish on account of the seniority of my see over which I am a bishop. However, I am not as anxious as you would think to ordain»⁷⁸. In fact, the bishop of Dyrrachium, whom he

74. *Akribeia* can be defined as the strict observance of the teachings and the canons of Orthodoxy. For a brief but comprehensive account of the concept of *akribeia* in the Orthodox Church, see the article *ἀκριβεία* in *Ἡθική καὶ Θερησκευτική Ἑγκυκλοπαίδεια*, vol. I, cols. 1226-1228.

75. Apocaucos wrote «Ὁ μὲν σκοπὸς τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐμφανείας τοῦ ἐξ Ἀνατολῆς σημειώματος συζήτησιν ἐπισκοπικὴν καὶ συνέταξιν ἀπαιτεῖ...» S. Petrides, «Jean Apocaucos, lettres et autres documents inedits», *Bulletin de l'Institut archeologique Russe à Constantinople* XIV (1909), 26.

76. *Epirotica*, No. 17, pp. 270-278. This letter is dated April 1222.

77. *ibid.*, p. 276ff.

78. *ibid.*, p. 270, «... καὶ οἱ πάντες ὑπ' ἐμοῦ τελεῖσθαι βιάζονται, τὴν

saw only once, was ordained not by him but by a synod of bishops at the suggestion of Michael Angelos. The bishop of Larissa was likewise ordained by the bishop of Leucas who is now deceased⁷⁹. «I would not approve of the ordination of the bishop of Corfu», he added, «if I had not known that he is a man of learning and piety. Actually, Bardanes was considered by the archbishop of Bulgaria [Chomatianos] as a candidate for the bishopric of Grevenon. However, I took him out of the Bulgarian bishops and attached him to our synod thinking that it would be a grave mistake to lose such a man»⁸⁰. Moreover, the rumor that the bishop of Larissa is dead is unfounded. He was ill but he is now in office enjoying good health⁸¹. On the other hand, Demetrios Chomatianos, «whom I admire for his good life and erudition», Apocaucos continued, «is as distant in mixing in the affairs of our dioceses as the dead are from our daily life»⁸². The patriarch, however, called him ignorant of the discipline of the Church forgetting that Chomatianos had served as *chartophylax* in the Patriarchate and that he was admired by everybody for his piety and erudition. «For things you do not exactly know», Apocaucos said, «do not render judgment»⁸³.

The signature of the Patriarch: «Μανουὴλ ἐλέω Θεοῦ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως νέας Ρώμης καὶ οἰκουμενικὸς πατριάρχης», provoked Apocaucos to observe that in his association with Patriarchs and the Patriarchate he had never encountered anyone adding to his signature the title «ecumenical patriarch»⁸⁴.

τῆς ἐμῆς ἱερατικῆς καταστάσεως ἐκ τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως ἀρχαιότητα... ὑπολογιζόμενοι... Καὶ ἴσθι ὡς πρόθυμος οὐκ εἰμὶ χειροτονητής...»

79. *ibid.*

80. *ibid.*

81. *ibid.*, p. 272.

82. *ibid.*

83. *ibid.*

84. V. Laurent, «Le Titre de Patriarche Oecumenique et la Signature patriarchale», *Revue des Études Byzantines* VI (1948), 5-26, esp. 15-17, 24-25. Apocaucos as a former functionary of the patriarchal office must have been familiar with the protocol observed in the signing of patriarchal documents. The title of the patriarch as «ecumenical» was first introduced in the fifth century. Its appearance in the protocol was ought to Photios and on official seals to Cerularios. However, the title «ecumenical» in the twelfth century does not appear as often. The testimony of Apocaucos, therefore, must not be questioned or doubted. On the title of the patriarch as «ecumenical», see

The patriarch should better consult, Apocaucos sarcastically said, the works of Peter, the Patriarch of Antioch, who dealt with this very subject⁸⁵.

After these preliminary observations, Apocaucos began to discuss their ecclesiastical policies. The problem of the episcopal nominations, he said, could not be considered apart from the new political order that Theodore Angelos had established in Epiros. Under the present circumstances, it would be quite impossible for their newly elected bishops to come to Nicaea to ratify their appointments. Besides, these bishops were usually appointed to office by Theodore Angelos himself⁸⁶. As soon as he would liberate a city from the Latins, he would waste no time to establish there an Orthodox bishop⁸⁷. Apocaucos agreed that there should be only one kingdom — *basileia* — and one patriarch⁸⁸. But the Empire has been divided and dismembered. The patriarch has lost his see and «αὐτὸς ἔξω τῆς οἰκείας πλάζεται μάνδρας»⁸⁹. Moreover, his faithful have been dispersed and are ruled by different authorities. In matters of faith, to be sure, they are still united. But not in matters of polity. Although they are of one faith, in all the rest they are divided: «ὅσα περὶ στρατηγίαν, ὅσα περὶ πολέμου, ὅσα περὶ πολιτικὰς διεξαγωγὰς τε καὶ διοικήσεις...»⁹⁰.

If the patriarch wished to excommunicate the ordaining bishops and those ordained by them instead of bridging the rift he will only widen it. All the bishops, including Chomatianos, Bardanes and Costomyres were elected on the highest recommendations⁹¹. The election of Chomatianos to the archbishopric of Achrida took place according to the customs of the Church⁹². The

also, H. -G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, op. cit., p. 63.

85. *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 271. Apocaucos obviously referred Manuel to a letter of Peter, the Patriarch of Antioch which dealt with the problem of the «pentarchy». PG, 102, cols. 756ff.

86. *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 276.

87. *ibid.*, «ἀλλ' ἅμα τέ τις ἦλω πόλις αὐτῶ καὶ ἅμα ἐπίσκοπον ἐν ταύτῃ θέλει καθίστασθαι καὶ τὴν λατινικὴν μιὰν διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρρύτου καὶ θρησκείας... ἀνακαθαίρεσθαι».

88. *ibid.*, «... καὶ μίαν εἶναι βασιλείαν τὰ κοσμικὰ διευθύνουσιν καὶ πρῶτον ἕνα ποιμένα τὰ ἱερατικὰ διοικονομούμενον».

89. *ibid.*

90. *ibid.*, pp. 276-277.

91. *ibid.*, p. 272.

92. *ibid.*, «Ἐπιλέλεκται μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ τῆς τούτου ἐξουσίας ὁ Βουλγαρίας

patriarch's insinuation that his appointment was not valid because Chomatianos was not invested by the emperor, Theodore Lascaris, is unfounded. The Church has always accepted the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem as canonically elected even though none of them had the sanction of the Emperor⁹³. The investiture of the bishops by the Emperor, Apocaucos argued, pertains only to their election as potential candidates but bears no real significance as to their ordination⁹⁴.

However sincere, the letter of Apocaucos could not convince the patriarch that it was necessity that had forced them to follow this polity. Considering that the Church was an integral part of the State, it should not have been too hard to find the justification of Apocaucos acceptable. However, the patriarch considered the ecclesiastical policy of Epiros as a threat to the unity of the Church and moreover as an insult to the sovereignty of the Lascarids. In order to curb the religious policy of Theodore Angelos, Manuel elevated in 1220 the bishopric of Pec to the status of an autocephalous archbishopric ordaining as its first archbishop Savas, the brother of Stephen II, the zupan of Serbia⁹⁵. The elevation of Savas to the see of Pec was obviously intended to challenge the jurisdictional rights of Justiniana Prima, the autocephalous archbishopric of Demetrios Chomatianos. The conflict between Savas and Chomatianos was inevitable but it was never blown out of proportion as the patriarch had hoped⁹⁶. In fact,

(Χωματιανός), χειροτονήται δὲ παρὰ τῆς ὑπ' αὐτὸν συνόδου κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν συνήθειαν...»

93. *ibid.*, p. 273.

94. *ibid.*, «Ἔστι δὲ ἡ ἐκ βασιλέως προχείρισις ὡς εἰκάζω τέως ἐγώ, μόνον γνωριστικὴ τῆς τῶν προσώπων ἐπιλογῆς, οὐδὲν δὲ τι πλέον συμβαλλομένη πρὸς τὴν ἐπισκοπικὴν τελειότητα».

95. G. Konidares, «Περὶ τὸ ζήτημα τῆς Γενέσεως τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀχριδῶν καὶ τῶν Notitiarum No. 3 παρὰ Parthey» in *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς* XVI (Athens, 1968), 223 ff.; Heinrich Gelzer, «Unge-druckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverzeichnisse der Orientalischen Kirche» *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* II (1893), 64-65.

96. With the establishment of an autonomous Church in Serbia, the territorial integrity of Achrida was violated especially as several of its bishoprics came under Serbian control. Chomatianos urged Savas to lay aside his claims as autocephalous archbishop because his appointment was uncanonical. He called him into repentance, threatening him with excommunication, if he would not obey. The text of Chomatianos' letter is contained in Pitra, *Analecta*, op. cit., cols. 381-390.

it was considered a problem that concerned only the two, Savas and Chomatianos, leaving the patriarch out of the issue.

Patriarch Manuel II died in 1222 and was succeeded by Germanos II. He was the first of all the Nicene-based Patriarchs to have dared to openly discuss the problem of his spiritual and jurisdictional authority outside of the Lascarids' domains. Whereas his predecessors chose to completely ignore this issue, Manuel took it upon himself to solve the problem. Unfortunately, he did not show moderation neither was he able to see the situation with enough realism. Indeed, he should have regarded the whole problem of the episcopal elections as a temporary one. Apocaucos more than once said that their ecclesiastical policies were largely determined by the prevailing political conditions. The patriarch, however, dismissed this point as irrelevant because he considered uncanonical procedure as a potential threat to the unity of the Church⁹⁷. Under different circumstances the same problem would have been considered as a disciplinary matter. However, with the rise of Nicaea and Epiros to power this problem was seen in a different light. Apocaucos had proposed that since the Empire was politically divided, jurisdictionally the Church should follow a similar path. Both the patriarch and Apocaucos considered the Church as an organic part of the State. But for the patriarch there was no other State but Nicaea, the only authentic continuator of the Empire. This consideration alone rendered the issue quite important.

The patriarch considered the episcopal elections as a problem that concerned the leadership of the Church and only indirectly the Emperor. For Apocaucos and the Epirote Synod, the problem was not seen only as an ecclesiastical one, because their policies were directed by Theodore Angelos. In their case, ecclesiastical and political considerations were linked. This was not unusual because they acknowledged Theodore's services to the Church as worthy of the Crown⁹⁸. The notion of a ruler's services to the Church and to the State is a recurring theme in Byzantine litera-

97. *Epirotica*, No. 16, p. 268: «...καὶ μηδαμῶς ἀνεχομένη τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἁμῶν σωμὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὁπωσοῦν διασπώμενον παρορᾶν...»

98. Apocaucos wrote to the patriarch that they considered Theodore as their divinely appointed ruler: «...δὲν (Θεόδωρον) ἡμεῖς θεόθεν ἀπεστάλθαι φρονοῦμεν καὶ βασιλέα τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐπιγραφόμεθα». *ibid.*, No. 17, p. 272.

ture implicit to his qualifications as emperor⁹⁹. In fact, one of the arguments raised by the Epirotes in justifying their cooperation with Theodore was his victories over the Latins and the restoration of Orthodoxy in formerly Latin controlled territories¹⁰⁰. Of course, the same held true for the Lascarids. They were fighting the Latins too, rendering a great service to the Church and the people. But since the patriarch had the upper hand in the discussion it never occurred to him to assert his authority by pointing to the accomplishments of the Lascarids.

Another issue that was avoided to be discussed at this stage of the controversy was the sovereignty of Theodore Lascaris as Emperor of the Greeks. The Epirote clergy avoided mentioning Theodore Lascaris as Emperor although they acknowledged Manuel as Patriarch. Under different circumstances, this would be an obvious contradiction. If they acknowledged the spiritual head of the State, they should acknowledge the political under whose patronage the former functioned. And in essence, this very point was the culmination of the whole issue and in particular of the patriarch's argument.

But for the Epirote clergy and particularly for Theodore Angelos this mattered very little. As long as the Empire was divided and Constantinople was in captivity, they argued, that there could be no Empire - *basileia*. To be sure, they were willing to acknowledge the patriarch's spiritual authority but not his jurisdictional because he was like the rest of them in exile. Later, they would even debate the legitimacy of his title as Patriarch of Constantinople arguing that he should be more appropriately called bishop of Nicaea.

The only criterion that would make the patriarch's and the emperor's claims really legitimate was to regain their respective sees from the Latins. Claiming the title alone was not sufficient. Since Constantinople was in the hands of the Latins their claims were like anyone else's and for that matter no better than theirs. These ideas were only implicitly stated at this stage of the dispute. But with the liberation of Thessalonica from the Latins by Theodore Angelos (1224), these ideas became strong issues dramatically changing the tone of the dispute from that of a dialogue to a schism.

99. Brehier, *Les Institutions*, op. cit., pp. 53-65.

100. *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 276.

CHAPTER IV

THE SCHISM

In spite of all his efforts to resolve the ecclesiastical conflict with the Epirotes, Patriarch Manuel accomplished very little, leaving the problem to be resolved by his successor Germanos II¹. Patriarch Germanos was elevated to the throne in 1223², by John III Vatatzes who in the meantime succeeded his father-in-law Theodore Lascaris to the throne³. Germanos adopted the same intransigent attitude towards the Epirotes as his predecessor, strongly advocating his patriarchal rights and jurisdictional prerogatives. His correspondence and writings⁴ reveal a man of dynamic character and deep concern for the unity of the Church. A prolific writer, he strove to uplift the morale of his fold by issuing encyclicas, writing sermons and combatting heresy. Indeed, besides his preoccupation with the rival claims of the Epirote clergy, he laboriously worked to instruct the Orthodox under Latin rule as those in Constantinople and Cyprus⁵.

1. The only detailed and now somewhat out-of-date study on Patriarch Germanos is in Greek: S. Lagopates, *Γερμανός II Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως-Νικαίας*, [1222-1240], (Tripolis, 1913). Also, H.-G. Beck, *op. cit.*, pp. 667-668.

2. For a long time, the date of Germanos' enthronement was believed to be June 30, 1222; Lagopates, *op. cit.*, p. 25. On the basis of a letter sent to Germanos by Theodore, bishop of Alania, it is now established that Germanos was proclaimed patriarch later, in January 1223: Maria Nystazopoulou, «'Ο 'Αλανικός τοῦ ἐπισκόπου 'Αλανίας Θεοδώρου καὶ ἡ εἰς τὸν Πατριαρχικὸν θρόνον ἀνάρρησις Γερμανοῦ τοῦ Β'». *Ἑπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, XXXIII (1964), 270-278.

Vitalien Laurent, «La Chronologie des Patriarches de Constantinople au XIII s. (1208-1309)», *Revue des Études Byzantines* XXVII (1969), 136-137.

3. The elevation of John Vatatzes to the throne is only briefly stated in the sources: «...καταλύει τὸν βίον [ὁ Θεόδωρος Λάσκαρις], τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ καταλιπὼν τῷ γαμβρῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ τῷ Δούκῃ». Acr. p. 31.11-13.

4. The greater number of Germanos' works have been published by Lagopates, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-363.

5. *ibid.*, pp. 350-353. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, Nos. 1233-1235, pp. 42-45.

Germanos regarded the problem of the uncanonical ordinations not only as a disciplinary issue but as a problem that was closely linked with the political situation in general and with the policies of Theodore Angelos in particular. In dealing with this problem Germanos, unlike Manuel, had considerable support from John Vatatzes whose rights to the throne were challenged when Theodore Angelos proclaimed himself Emperor in Thessalonica, ca 1224⁶. Even though they combined efforts, the patriarch and Vatatzes accomplished nothing but to make the rift between the two clergies final. However, the fault for dividing the unity of the Church was not theirs alone. Ever since Theodore Angelos was heading victoriously towards Thessalonica, the Epirotes were impatiently waiting the day to proclaim him *basileus* and themselves ecclesiastically independent. That this was the case, one needs only to consider Apocaucos' correspondence with Theodore Angelos⁷.

After the fall of Prosec and Platamona, Theodore was expected soon to enter triumphantly in Thessalonica⁸. Apocaucos often wrote him of the day he would like to see Theodore crowned there Emperor of the Greeks⁹. Apocaucos was not the only one that was contemplating Theodore as *basileus*. The army as well as the clergy seemed to have wished the same¹⁰. In the fall of 1224, Theodore marched victorious in Thessalonica and there

6. Acr. p. 33.14ff: «'Ο δὲ Κομνηνὸς Θεόδωρος... τὰ τῆς βασιλείας σφετερισάμενος, ἐπεὶ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης γέγονεν ἐγκρατής... πορφυρίδα τε ὑπενδύεται καὶ ἐρυθρὰ περιβάλλεται πέδιλα...»

7. *Epirotica*, No. 3, p. 245 after the fall of Prosec: «...καὶ μεγαλύνει σε ὁ θεὸς καὶ κραταιώσῃ σε ἐπὶ πλέον, καὶ τὸ βασιλικὸν καὶ πάτριον ὑποδῆσαι σε πέδιλον». No. 4, p. 247, after Theodore's victory in Platamona: «...καὶ τῷ θεῷ μύρῳ χρισθήσομαι ὡς καὶ χρῖσμα ἕτερον παρυψώσεως θαρρούντως παραδοκεῖν ἐκ ταύτης τῆς κρίσεως». In this letter to Theodore, Apocaucos alluded to the imperial anointment - «ὡς καὶ χρῖσμα ἕτερον παρυψώσεως θαρρούντως παραδοκεῖν [watch eagerly, expectantly] ἐκ ταύτης τῆς κρίσεως». If indeed, Ostrogorsky, *Zur Kaisersalbung* *op. cit.*, pp. 245-250, is correct that the imperial anointment was introduced shortly after 1204, then Apocaucos' numerous references to the χρῖσμα can hardly be accounted for, especially as this practice was supposedly adopted from the Latins. Consider also No. 3. p. 245 «...καὶ τῆς μύρου ἀποφορᾶς... αἰσθάνομαι καὶ παραδοκῶ κεφαλὴν καὶ χεῖρας... χρισθήσεσθαι».

8. *ibid.*, No. 4, p. 247.

9. *ibid.*, no. 3, p. 245. 24; No. 25, p. 288.

10. Pitra, *op. cit.*, col. 488.

he was unanimously proclaimed *basileus*, justifying everyone's expectations¹¹.

After his proclamation to the throne, Theodore proceeded to be formally anointed and crowned emperor¹². The task was to be performed by the city's highest ranking ecclesiastic, the Metropolitan of Thessalonica Constantine Mesopotamites. Mesopotamites, however, was unwilling to crown Theodore saying that the Nicene rulers were the only legitimate heirs to the Byzantine throne¹³. Despite the fact that Theodore had restored him to his see after the expulsion of the Latins, Mesopotamites would not change his mind¹⁴. Hearing of Mesopotamites' attitude towards Theodore, Apocauco immediately wrote to him hoping to convince him with his arguments¹⁵. He reminded the Metropolitan of Theodore's generosity towards him and of the services he had rendered to the struggle against the Latins¹⁶. Mesopotamites was not moved by Apocauco's letter neither did the repeated efforts of other influential men changed his decision. Finally he left his see going again into exile¹⁷.

11. Longnon, *La reprise*, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-146; Sinogowitz, *Zur Eroberung*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

12. For a discussion of the date of Theodore's coronation, see Stiernon, *La date du couronnement*, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-202.

13. Acr. p. 33. 20ff: «...ἀντιστάντος αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τούτῳ στερρότατα τοῦ μητροπολίτου Θεσσαλονίκης Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Μεσοποταμίτου...»

14. *Epirotica*, No. 20, p. 280: «Σὺ τε γὰρ διὰ καιρικὴν περιπέτειαν ὅπως οὖν ἐκπέπτωκας τῆς λαχούσης σε, πάλιν δὲ διὰ τῆς ἐπανελεύσεως ἀνέστης, ὥσπερ καὶ ἀνορθωτής, καὶ ἔστης ἄπο τοῦ θρόνου σου... Σὺ μὲν, ὡς δι' αὐτοῦ [τοῦ Μιχαήλ Ἀγγέλου] τῇ πόλει σου ἐπανασωθέντα...»; L. Petit, «Les eveques de Thessalonique» *Échos d'Orient* V (1901), 30, without real proof, argued that Mesopotamites was restored to his see with the help of the crusaders.

15. *ibid.*, pp. 280-282. No. 19, p. 280: «Κατ' ἐπιταγὴν... τοῦ Δούκα ἐποίησα καὶ πρὸς τὸν Θεσσαλονίκης γραφὴν...» W. Norden, *op. cit.*, p. 301, n. 5 mistakenly assumed that the letter of Apocauco was addressed to Theodore Angelos congratulating him of his conquest of Thessalonica. Obviously, Norden was misled by reading only the title of the letter, «Θεσσαλονίκης δεσπότη Θεοταλάς...»

16. *ibid.*, No. 20, p. 280: «Χάριν δὲ καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τὴν δι' εὐχῶν ἀναπέμπειν ὑπὲρ τούτων τῷ κραταιῷ Κομνηνῷ καὶ σὲ καὶ ἡμᾶς τὸ δίκαιον ἀπαιτεῖ».

17. Acropolites wrote that Mesopotamites was forcibly expelled from his see for not crowning Theodore: «...ὃν [τὸν Μεσοποταμίτην] καὶ πολλαῖς κακουχίαις καὶ ἑξορίαις διὰ ταῦτα ὑπέβαλε τῶν κανονικῶν ἐθῶν ἀντεχόμενον». p. 33. 22-24. Bardanes, however, maintained that Mesopotamites left the

In the meantime, the synod of the Epirote bishops convened in Arta to issue a synodal act stating the reasons for proclaiming Theodore emperor¹⁸. Theodore's accomplishments are innumerable, they said, as the sacrifices and the hardships he endured to restore to them freedom and Orthodoxy¹⁹. He deserved the crown not only for the services he had rendered to them but also because of his imperial lineage²⁰. His ascent to the *imperium* had been acclaimed by everybody including, «ἐπισκοπικαῖς ὁμολογίαις καὶ λοιπῶν ἱερέων καὶ μοναχῶν καὶ στρατιωτῶν ἐπικρίσει καὶ πάντα τῶν ἐνταῦθα Χριστιανῶν»²¹.

Theodore's coronation was lastly performed by Demetrios Chomatianos the autocephalous Archbishop of Justiniana Prima²². Chomatianos maintained that as an autocephalous archbishop he had the authority, «βασιλέας χρίειν οὐς καὶ ὅπου καὶ ὅτε βούλοιτο... καὶ μηδενὶ εὐθύνας ὀφείλων δοῦναι»²³. However, it was not Cho-

see voluntarily despite Theodore's efforts to keep him there: A. Mustoxides, *Delle Cose Corciresi*, (Corfu, 1848), Appendix p. L ff. Yet the testimony of Bardanes is contradicted by Apocauco who described, in a letter of his, the wrath of Theodore against Mesopotamites as follows: *Epirotica*, No. 19, p. 280: «...ὁ γὰρ πανευτυχέστατος κύριος μου ὁ Δούκας ἐκεῖθεν ἐπανελθὼν μεῖζονα τῶν ὑπὸ σοῦ γραφέντων ἐξηγήσατο καὶ βαρύτερα ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ κραταῖος Κομνηνὸς ἐν ἰδίᾳ γραφῇ ἔτι καὶ τούτων δριμύτερα...» Also No. 25, p. 287: «Οἶδεν ὁ λέγων ἢ ἐν Ἀρτῇ κατὰ τοῦ Θεσσαλονίκης ὀργή, ἥτις ἀνήφθη μὲν, ὡς πυρός...»

18. *ibid.*, «Πρᾶξις συνοδικὴ περὶ τῆς τοῦ δεσπότη Θεοδώρου εἰς βασιλέα ἀναγορεύσεως», No. 24, pp. 285-286. The date of this synodal act must be placed before March 1225 as it is evinced from a letter of Apocauco, *Epirotica*, No. 21, p. 282. In March 1225, Apocauco was still in Arta contemplating Theodore's coronation which was to be held later in Thessalonica.

19. *ibid.*, p. 285: «...πολλοὺς μὲν πόνους ὑπομείνας ἕνεκα τῶν ἐνταῦθα Χριστιανῶν, πολλοὺς δὲ ἰδρῶτας κενώσας ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν... ἐκ τῶν πολεμικῶν ἀγῶνων καὶ συμπλοκῶν...»

20. *ibid.*, p. 286: «τὸ δὲ μεῖζον εἰπεῖν καὶ ὁ παρὰ παντὸς ὁμολόγηται στόματος, ὡς διαφόρων βασιλέων ἀπόγονος καὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλικὴν ἀναγωγὴν δικαιούμενος...»

21. *ibid.*

22. Acr. p. 34. 1 ff: «ὁ δὲ Βουλγαρίας ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Δημήτριος, βασιλικὸν περιδιδύσκει τοῦτον διάδῃμα, ὡς ἔφασκεν, αὐτόνομος ὢν...» Nic. Greg., p. 26, 11 ff: «καὶ δὴ καὶ αὐτονομεῖσθαι ταύτην εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς προσετέταται, πλην οὐχ ὥστε καὶ βασιλέας χρίειν Ῥωμαίων, τοῦτο γὰρ ἄλλοις ἐφέηται παρὰ τῶν νόμων».

23. *ibid.*, lines 3-5. Chomatianos, the autocephalous archbishop of Achrida and Justiniana Prima, claimed to have the right of anointing and crowning the Emperor on account of the pre-eminence of his see: «... τὴν ὑπεροχὴν ἔχοντες ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς θρόνου μεγαλειότητος...» in Pitra

matianos who was really behind Theodore's coronation but the synod of the Epirote bishops²⁴. Chomatianos was chosen to perform the rite because his see ranked the highest in Theodore's realm. In crowning Theodore *basileus*, Chomatianos acted in the name of the clergy, the army and the senate, the three constitutional elements of their Byzantine State²⁵.

The time and the details of Theodore's coronation in Thessalonica can only be surmised from Apocauco's correspondence²⁶. Stiernon has suggested as a probable date for the coronation the fall of 1227 or the spring of 1228²⁷. Considering the fact that

op. cit., col. 489. Actually, the identification of Achrida with the archbishopric of Justiniana Prima is questionable: M. J. Zeiller, «Le site de Justiniana Prima» in *Melanges Charles Diehl*, (Paris, 1930), vol. I, 299-304. The privileges which Chomatianos claimed were at first fabricated by a cleric of the archbishopric of Achrida who wished to identify his see with Justiniana Prima. Theophylact (11th c), however, seems to have ignored this theory which was expounded at length only at the time of Chomatianos. Chomatianos, on his part, advanced the theory (i) because he wished to check the ecclesiastical expansion of the archbishoprics of Tirnovo and Pec and (ii) because he had to provide, in his encounter with Patriarch Germanos, some justification for Theodore's anointment and coronation: Gelzer, *Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverszeichnisse*, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41; 61-63. Demetrios Chomatianos signed his documents as «Δημήτριος ἐλέω Θεοῦ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῆς πρώτης Ἰουστινιανῆς καὶ πάσης Βουλγαρίας» but his archbishopric ever since the creation of the see of Tirnovo (1187) and Pec (1219) had lost all control over Bulgarian territories. In spite of that, Chomatianos and his successors retained the title of «all Bulgaria». Vasil N. Zlatarski, «Prima Justiniana im Titel des Bulgarischen Erzbischofs von Achrida» *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* XXX (1929), 488ff; Heinrich Gelzer, «Der Patriarchat von Achrida. Geschichte und Urkunden», *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse der königlichen sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*. V (1902), 16-18.

24. *Epirotica*, No. 24, p. 285.

25. *ibid.*, p. 286. Chomatianos also testified to this in his letter to Patriarch Germanos: «... καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴπη τις, ὡς τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων συμπνευσάντων γέγονεν αὐτόθι, δὲ γέγονεν... καὶ οὕτως οὐδ' ἐνταῦθα βασιλικὴ πρόβλησις συγκλήτου βουλῆς ἡμείρησε καὶ ἀρχιερατικῆς συμπνοίας καὶ συνδρομῆς...» Pitra, *op. cit.*, col. 490.

26. *Epirotica*, pp. 279-288. Apocauco took part in Theodore's coronation in Thessalonica No. 23, p. 284; No 25, p. 288, 5-8. He spent the winter of 1224-1225 in Arta seriously ill but he was able to take active part in the synod which met there to proclaim officially Theodore's ascent to the throne (1225): No. 24, pp. 285-286. Apocauco also wrote to Theodore to congratulate him for his ascent to power: No. 25, pp. 286-288.

27. L. Stiernon, *La date du couronnement de Theodore Doukas*, *op. cit.*,

Thessalonica was stormed as early as 1224 these dates seem somewhat late and rather problematic. If Theodore had to delay his coronation for almost four years surely there should be a reason. Stiernon provides none²⁸.

Be that as it may, sometime after March 1225, the synod of the Epirote bishops, with the consent of Theodore, convened again in Arta to outline their future religious policy towards the Patriarchate at Nicaea²⁹. The synod issued a statement entitled «πρὸς τὸν Πατριάρχην πιττάκιον τῶν ὅλων ἀρχιερέων σχεδιασθὲν παρὰ τοῦ Ναυπάκτου»³⁰. The Epirotes expressed their regret that

pp. 200-202. Stiernon proposed these dates —fall of 1227 or the spring of 1228— by comparing various texts which either designated Theodore as emperor (μέγιστε βασιλεῦ, κράτιστε βασιλεῦ) or only as ruler (μεγαλοργὴ Κομνηνέ, Θεομεγάλυντε Κομνηνέ). The former, Stiernon argued, referred to Theodore after his coronation whereas the latter belong to an earlier time. However, Theodore Angelos was considered *basileus* as soon as he conquered Thessalonica and was addressed as such even before his anointment and coronation. Apocauco had written to Patriarch Manuel (d. 1222) that they considered Theodore as their king and divinely appointed ruler: «... ὃν ἡμεῖς θεόθεν ἀπεστάλθαι φρονοῦμεν καὶ βασιλέα τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐπιγράφομεθα». *Epirotica*, No. 17, p. 272. Later, he also wrote to Theodore's wife, Maria Doucas, of his wish to be present at Theodore's coronation: «Καὶ ἀξιῶσαι με ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ προσκυνῆσαι τὴν βασιλείαν ὑμῶν καὶ τῆς ἐν τῇ βασιλικῇ στεφνοφορίας μὴ στερηθῆναι λαμπρότητος». According to Byzantine constitutional theory, the *imperium* was usually invested to a ruler during his proclamation. Christophilopoulou, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

28. Stiernon, *loc. cit.*

29. The gathering of this synod must be placed after March 1225 and probably after Theodore's anointment and coronation in Thessalonica. In the *pittakion*, he is referred as *basileus* and *autocrator*. One of the charges made against the patriarch in Nicaea was that he did not acknowledge Theodore Angelos as such. *Epirotica*, No. 26, p. 291, 31-33.

30. *ibid.*, No. 26, pp. 288-293; Lagopates, *op. cit.*, p. 35, believed that this document was sent to Germanos a little while before the fall of Thessalonica. He arrived at this conclusion arguing that the bishops in their letter nowhere mentioned Theodore's conquest of Thessalonica, although they did mention his earlier victory over Peter of Courtenay. True, the bishops avoided to mention Theodore's greatest victory, the capture of Thessalonica because they did not find it necessary. That this letter was sent to Germanos after the fall of Thessalonica can be attested by the fact that (i) Theodore was throughout mentioned as *basileus*; (ii) in their demands they made it clear that they had real bargaining power i. e. Thessalonica and the fact of Theodore's proclamation and (iii) that they were determined to break off relations with the patriarchate because strategically and militarily they were far better off than Nicaea

the circumstances had prevented closer ties with Nicaea and repeated the familiar arguments for not accepting the patriarch's jurisdictional prerogatives over them³¹. The patriarch, they demanded, should give them the right to elect their bishops themselves. If he will comply with their request his name will constantly be commemorated in their services. In addition, they asked him to ratify the ordinations of the bishops of Leucas, Pharsalon and Corfu³².

The patriarch's silence and indifference towards them, they added, does not justify his title of ecumenical patriarch. If he does not respond accordingly, they are afraid that they will succumb to Theodore's pressures to recognize the primacy of the Roman Pope³³. They allowed the patriarch three months to decide³⁴.

Interestingly enough, the Synod avoided to mention the recent event of Theodore's anointment and coronation, only stating that he rightfully deserved the title of *basileus* on account of his imperial lineage³⁵ and the many services he has rendered to the Church and the State³⁶. However, they made it clear to the patriarch that Theodore had *ipso jure* the right to the *imperium* and therefore there was no point of discussing the matter any further³⁷. Obviously, by presenting the patriarch with a *fait accompli* the bishops had hoped to spare themselves from entering into another controversy especially as their ecclesiastical problems were still lingering on.

31. *Epirotica*, No. 26, p. 289ff. The arguments were:

- (i) It was not to their advantage.
- (ii) Politically they were divided.
- (iii) They accepted the patriarch's spiritual authority but not his jurisdictional.
- (iv) They acted in the spirit of *economia*: «Ἡ γὰρ καιρικὴ τῶν πραγμάτων περιφορὰ καὶ καθολικὴ σύγχυσις ἔδειαν παραλόγου καινοτομίας καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐπισκοπικοῖς εἰσήνεγκεν ἐνεργήμασι». p. 290.

32. *ibid.*, p. 290.

33. *ibid.*, p. 291. And to think that Apocaucos a few years earlier had castigated the patriarch's proposal for union with Rome proudly declaring Theodore's faith to Orthodoxy. *Epirotica*, No. 15, p. 267.

34. *ibid.*, p. 291.

35. *ibid.*

36. *Epirotica*, No. 26, p. 292.

37. *ibid.*, : «τὸν γοῦν τοιοῦτον καὶ ἐν τοιοῦτοις διαλάψαντα κατορθώμασι, τὸν ἀριστέα, τὸν νικητὴν εἰ μὴ τις τοῦ τῆς βασιλείας ὀνόματος ἀξιοῖ, σχολῇ γ' ἂν ἕτερον».

Promptly, Germanos convened in Nicaea a synod which issued an official statement condemning Theodore Angelos' adoption of the title of *basileus*³⁸. Moreover, the synod resolved to write to Theodore advising him to lay aside the purple because, they said, it was not common for their race to have two emperors and two patriarchs³⁹. The act of the synod accomplished very little except to prompt Demetrios Chomatianos to send a letter to Germanos. Moved by the synod's condemnation for the part he had played in Theodore's coronation, Chomatianos sent the patriarch a letter congratulating him for his installation to office⁴⁰.

In his opening paragraph, Chomatianos first expressed his gratitude to God for elevating to the Patriarchal throne a worthy and virtuous man. Despite the «anomalous conditions and the confusion of the times», he alluded, to David's exclamation: «Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity»⁴¹. But the wordly upheavals, he continued, have cast a «shadow» over the Greeks depriving them of the patriarch's «fatherly voice»⁴². Nevertheless, the Epirote Church has survived and flourished due to the patriarch's prayers and the protection of their «divinely-crowned Emperor»⁴³. As a result, their congregations have multiplied especially after Theodore Angelos «chased the wolves — the Latins — from the fold»⁴⁴. Indeed, Chomatianos added, Theodore's deeds «leave no room for censure». He has restored order and has filled numerous bishoprics with men of faith and proven virtues⁴⁵. The archbishop concluded then, wishing

38. Blemmydes wrote that a synod of about forty bishops was convened by Germanos in Nicaea to condemn Theodore's adoption of the *imperium*. Blemmydes, *Curriculum vitae*, *op. cit.*, p. 14. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1239, p. 47.

39. *ibid.* Germanos, after the convocation of this synod, entrusted to the Metropolitan of Amastris, Nicholas Caloethes, a pastoral letter which was written as a response to the *pittakion* of the synod of Arta. This document is now lost but it is mentioned in a letter of Germanos to Chomatianos and in a letter of Bardanes addressed to Germanos. Pitra, *op. cit.*, col. 486. R. Loenertz, «Lettre de Georges Bardanes Metropolitte de Corcyre», *Ἑπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* XXXIII (1964), 104-118.

40. in Pitra, *Analecta*, *op. cit.*, col. 481-484.

41. *ibid.*, col. 481.

42. *ibid.*

43. *ibid.*, col. 482.

44. *ibid.*

45. *ibid.*

that the situation in the East may be as prosperous as in the West and that the rulers of both may harmoniously unite «so that the union of the holy Churches of God may be spared from any opposition»⁴⁶.

Despite all his euphemisms, Chomatianos addressed the patriarch as if he was his equal. By informing him of the state of the Epirote Church, Chomatianos did not act as the patriarch's subordinate but as the acknowledged leader of the Epirote clergy. This becomes clear from his wish for ecclesiastical union. As long as they were politically divided, the Church of Epiros would remain independent of the patriarch's jurisdiction. As for his role in the coronation of Theodore, Chomatianos said nothing except to mention Theodore in his letter as «θεοστέφῃ αὐτοκράτορα». But what he omitted by making only an occasional allusion to it, the patriarch brought it up in his reply⁴⁷.

In a somewhat abrupt manner, the patriarch cautioned Chomatianos not to frown upon his omission of the customary fraternal greeting. The purpose of his letter is not a salutatory one but to censure Chomatianos and the western clergy for their uncanonical actions⁴⁸. Giving no further explanations, the patriarch drove to the heart of the problem by asking when and whence Chomatianos obtained the right to crown emperors. «How could the archbishop of Bulgaria ever crown Emperors,» the patriarch asked. «When did a cleric of Achrida ever extend a patriarchal right hand to consecrate an imperial forehead?»⁴⁹ Chomatianos by crowning Theodore caused a rupture in the unity of the Orthodox Church. At the same time, he had insulted the divinely-appointed emperor whom God has placed in the East as a «guard with a flaming sword to thwart the infidel Saracenes»⁵⁰. The patriarch accused Chomatianos of exploiting the circumstances for his own advancement and personal interests. He announced to him at the end of his letter that he is sending Caloethes, the Metropolitan of Amastris, as his legate to inform Theodore Angelos of the patriarch's wishes⁵¹.

46. *ibid.*, col. 483.

47. *ibid.*, cols. 483-486. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1244, p. 52.

48. *ibid.*, col. 483.

49. *ibid.*, col. 484.

50. *ibid.*, col. 485.

51. *ibid.*, col. 486. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1248, p. 55.

Interestingly enough, Germanos spoke of Theodore with respect⁵² directing his censure solely against the arbitrary conduct of Chomatianos. To emphasize his resolution, Germanos also appointed a bishop of his own choice to the vacant see of Dyrrachium⁵³. However, the Epirotes did not recognize this appointment. Instead, their synod raised to the see of Dyrrachium Constantine Cabasilas, a friend of Chomatianos⁵⁴. Similarly, the mission of Caloethes proved fruitless in spite of his efforts to convince the Epirote synod in Thessalonica of the patriarch's authority and jurisdictional rights.

Up to this point, the debate did not involve the rulers of the two States. Whatever inferences were made, were indirect and more or less tactful. Moreover, both parties tried to contain the controversy within the framework of the ecclesiastical organization of their State, making only implicit allusions to the claims of their respective rulers. However, when Theodore Angelos expelled the patriarch's nominee from the see of Dyrrachium despite the pleas of the Epirote clergy, Patriarch Germanos violently attacked Theodore making him solely responsible for all the ecclesiastical injustices that his kingdom had committed against the sovereignty of Nicaea⁵⁵. Theodore, the patriarch pointed out, had promoted the schism of the Church by proclaiming himself emperor, expelling Constantine Mesopotamites unjustly from his see and breaking his oath of fidelity to Theodore Lascaris⁵⁶. At the same time, these violations have also hindered the Greek cause against the Latins, their common foe.

To answer these serious charges, George Bardanes, the Metropolitan of Corfu composed at the request of the Western pre-

52. Germanos called Theodore «ποθεινοτάτω υἱῷ τῆς ἀγιωτάτης τοῦ Θεοῦ μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας». *ibid.*

53. The name of this bishop still remains unknown. The only one to mention his appointment is Bardanes. Loenertz, *op. cit.*, p. 92, n. 4 and 112-113.

54. Pitra, *Analecta*, *op. cit.*, col. 617 ff.

55. These charges of Patriarch Germanos contained in a letter now lost, are mentioned by Bardanes who was entrusted with the task of answering them. The response of Bardanes is contained in Mustoxides, *op. cit.*, p. L-LVI. A far better edition of Bardanes' letter was undertaken by Raymond - J. Leonertz, «Lettre de Georges Bardanes Metropolitte de Corcyre au patriarche oecumenique Germain II, 1226-1227», in *Ἐπιστολὴς Ἐταίρου Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* XXXIII (1964), 104-118. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1249, p. 56.

56. Acr. p. 14. 24 ff.

lates who were assembled in Thessalonica, (1226-1227), an exhaustive letter in which he answered one by one the accusations of the patriarch. The bishop of Thessalonica was never forced by Theodore from his metropolis, Bardanes informed the patriarch. On the contrary, he was repeatedly asked to stay but instead he preferred to wander in exile ⁵⁷. On the other hand, Dyrrachium was retaken from the Latins with toils, blood and sacrifices. To offer it to a bishop whose loyalties belonged to an outside power was out of the question ⁵⁸. When the bishop of Amastris came to the West everybody anxiously went to hear him. But he failed to convince the assembly in Thessalonica because of his intransigent attitude ⁵⁹.

The accusation that Theodore Angelos did not keep his oath of loyalty to Lascaris was equally absurd. Theodore took the oath before Lascaris had proclaimed himself emperor ⁶⁰. Besides, Theodore had been all along helping Lascaris to establish his authority in Nicaea regardless of the manifold dangers that were surrounding them ⁶¹.

The question of episcopal appointments in Angelos' kingdom henceforth should not concern the patriarch. The candidates will be nominated by their ruler and their synod ⁶². To be sure, this procedure was irregular but such were the times and the circumstances they lived in ⁶³. To rectify the situation, their synod had earlier proposed a solution but the patriarch rejected it as unacceptable, «as if it was possible to alter the circumstances». But since this proved impossible it would be better for the two kingdoms to recognize each other's integrity and be content with their lot ⁶⁴. The western kingdom is like a garden «where everyone has easy access to it to walk, sit, pick flowers or rest» ⁶⁵. The other is likewise, a Paradise, but those who have reaped from its fruits

57. Bardanes, by Leonertz, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

58. *ibid.*, p. 112.

59. *ibid.*, p. 117.

60. *ibid.* pp. 115-116: «οὐδέπω γὰρ ἐστεφηφόρει τὸ τότε οὔτε μὴν πορφυρίδα ὁ τῆς Ἀσίας ἀρχίας περιεβάλλετο ἀλλ' ἦν τόπους τόπων ἀμείβων».

61. *ibid.*, p. 116.

62. *ibid.*, p. 113.

63. *ibid.*

64. *ibid.*, p. 117.

65. *ibid.*, p. 116.

were condemned to death making its entrance unfriendly and forbidding, Bardanes said ⁶⁶.

And indeed, they had every reason to believe so. The patriarch was only concerned for his prerogatives dismissing everything else as unimportant. Their actions were summarily condemned by him regardless of the fact that they were contributing too, to the struggle for the liberation of their lands. Their disregard towards canonical procedure had been interpreted by the patriarch as a schism and a hindrance to their common cause. The patriarch, naturally, had ignored that the ecclesiastical schism was a product of the Empire's disintegration and the rise to power of local rulers. His insistence to exercise absolute control over them was indeed unrealistic. A compromise on his part was necessary but he was afraid that it would jeopardize the claims to the throne of his ruler.

Meanwhile Apocaukos wrote to Germanos (1226-1227) from Thessalonica inquiring about the patriarch's silence for not having answered his letter ⁶⁷. He informed him that since his last letter he had been ill and that he was cured through the generosity of Theodore. He also reminded the patriarch of the former days they had spent together in Constantinople and beseeched him once more for the sake of their friendship to deem him worthy of his reply ⁶⁸. Germanos again did not answer.

In the meantime, Chomatianos addressed another letter to Germanos in which he discussed his activities as the autocephalous Archbishop of Justiana Prima ⁶⁹. He complained that the answer he had received from Germanos was insulting. He wrote a fraternal letter but instead he was charged with unfounded accusations. Such a letter surely did not befit a patriarch ⁷⁰. «Fulfilling a fraternal obligation», he said:

66. *ibid.*, pp. 116-117: Bardanes here makes an allusion to a statement made earlier by Patriarch Germanos who likened the Church in Nicaea to a Paradise guarded by an angel with a flaming sword; Pitra, *Analecta*, *op. cit.*, col. 485. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1243, p. 51.

67. *Epirotica*, No. 27. pp. 293-295. Apocaukos here alludes to a letter he had sent to Germanos from Arta (1225-1226). The text of this letter is now lost. Loenertz, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

68. *ibid.*, p. 295.

69. Pitra, *Analecta*, *op. cit.*, cols. 487-498.

70. *ibid.*, col. 487.

We wished to pay homage to your holiness... instead we received insults... We wrote to you again only because we did not wish to appear without defense. You have considered us guilty for anointing Theodore Emperor and usurpers for having dared to take from you that prerogative which entitles only you to anoint the Emperor. We repeat, your letter and judgment do not befit a Patriarch... We suspect that the voice in the letter was not really yours but the voice of your supreme political authority. The hand that wrote it was, however, the hand of your holiness. Know then that we are not as insolent and ignorant as you think so as to dare something which is beyond our task...

As you know the crisis that has befallen upon us has been threatening our undefiled faith... In view of this consideration, our senate, the clergy and the army invested upon Theodore the *imperium* anointing him King... Our decision was also influenced by the fact that the Kingdom of Nicaea is not strong enough to survive, especially, as it is now surrounded by enemies and countless difficulties... Moreover, we had to assert ourselves over our enemies. For this, we had to have a king. The coronation of Theodore took place unanimously in Thessalonica. We were chosen to perform the rite only because of the preeminence of our see... We complied with the request having no intention of fulfilling human ambitions or breaking deliberately the law. We accommodated ourselves to the circumstances being convinced that it was preferable to adapt ourselves to the times rather than to follow the

law's precision⁷¹.

Chomatianos maintained that as the autocephalous archbishop of the see of Achrida he had every right to anoint emperors. He argued that the status of Justiniana Prima alone entitled him with the privilege of anointing the emperor⁷². His see, he added, ranked only after those of Rome and Constantinople⁷³. Thus, he was not only the agent of the senate, the army and the clergy. On the contrary, as the autocephalous archbishop of an ancient see he had every right to perform this ceremony. Justinian had conferred upon his see, he said, special privileges and extraordinary powers⁷⁴.

The patriarch has charged them with uncanonical procedure, Chomatianos added, as if the Nicenes were completely innocent of violating the canons.

But they too have proclaimed in Nicaea a king and a patriarch forced by the circumstances. Who has ever heard one and the same person to act as the Metropolitan of Nicaea and at the same time to be called the Patriarch of Constantinople? What has taken place in Nicaea surely was not the result of a unanimous decision. The senate and the clergy and all those who survived the holocaust of Constantinople did not exclusively go to the East to proclaim an emperor. Many of them went to the West too where they proclaimed an emperor. The West, [that is Epiros and Macedonia], comprise at least half of the Empire's territory. As you can see then, your holiness, both your actions and ours resulted from the prevailing circumstances that followed the fall of the Empire. The only one who could dare to condemn your policies and ours surely would be someone

71. *ibid.*, cols. 487-489.

72. *ibid.*, col. 494.

73. *ibid.*, cols. 494-495.

74. *ibid.* On the claims of Chomatianos, see the discussion of Lagou-pates, *op. cit.*, p. 51, n. 1. - 53.

incapable of understanding the problem that has befallen upon us -[the Latin domination] ⁷⁵.

Chomatianos concluded his argument saying that in the East as in the West the circumstances are the same. But as far as they are concerned, they have offered the crown to a man of high birth and of many brave deeds. The manner of Theodore's elevation to the throne and his anointment was not irregular ⁷⁶. The preparation of the oil which is used in every anointment did not necessarily have to be blessed by the patriarch. In fact, the oil could be consecrated by any priest ⁷⁷. The anointing of kings was a part of the hierarchical liturgy and in no way the exclusive right of the patriarch ⁷⁸. Theodore's anointment, Chomatianos continued, «was performed by employing as it was customary consecrated oil», though, he said, we could have used the chrism which flows in rivers from the tomb of St. Demetrios in Thessalonica ⁷⁹.

Chomatianos finally accused Germanos of violating the territorial claims of Achrida by sanctioning the establishment of an autocephalous Church in Serbia clearly for political reasons. ⁸⁰ Both, the tone of his letter and his direct answers to the charges that the patriarch had levelled against him, indicate that Chomatianos was not seeking to reconcile himself. On the contrary, he strongly argued that his position in the western kingdom was comparable to that of the patriarch in the East and even better than his because the preeminence of his see was greater than that of Nicaea's. On the other hand, the claims of Theodore to the *imperium* were as good as those of the Nicene rulers and even better because of Theodore's imperial lineage ⁸¹. In substance, his letter reflected the same ideas as Apocaucos had earlier expressed in his letters. Moreover, he questioned the patriarch's spiritual authority as well as the authenticity of the claims of the Nicene rulers. As to the problem of the unity of the Orthodox Church, he did not show

⁷⁵. *ibid.*, cols. 489-490.

⁷⁶. *ibid.*, col. 492.

⁷⁷. *ibid.*, col. 493.

⁷⁸. *ibid.*

⁷⁹. *ibid.*

⁸⁰. *ibid.* cols. 495-496. For the elevation of Savas as an autocephalous archbishop in Serbia see the discussion on page 67.

⁸¹. *ibid.*, cols. 492-493.

any real interest. He did not care for reconciliation. As long as Constantinople was under the Latins and the ecclesiastical schism between Epiros and Nicaea was open, Achrida had nothing to lose but only to gain and Chomatianos knew it. In fact, his attempts to revive the special privileges that his see had allegedly enjoyed under Justinian were intentionally brought up in order to establish his preeminence vis-a-vis the patriarch's authority. Of course, he candidly admitted that he had mentioned his prerogative, only in order to justify his part in Theodore's coronation. But this is hardly convincing. If that was really the case, there was no need for him to dwell on the subject of his preeminence especially since any one could have performed the coronation.

If the patriarch had acted ecumenically surely the situation would be quite different. His loyalties, however, towards the Nicene kingdom and his insistence on the strict observance of the canons overshadowed any other consideration. In reality, the only ties he wanted and indeed he could have with the clergy of Epiros were to exercise over them his jurisdictional prerogatives while his home and loyalties were in Nicaea. But the Epirotes found this arrangement intolerable especially after their political expansion. If the patriarch had temporarily allowed them some measure of ecclesiastical autonomy they would have been content. In fact, they had assured him repeatedly that his name would continue to be mentioned in their *diptychs* acknowledging him as their spiritual head except in their administrative affairs. However, the patriarch found this insulting and unacceptable.

What the patriarch was not willing to offer to Theodore Angelos, Chomatianos was only too happy to provide. He ingeniously exploited the half-forgotten legend of Justiniana Prima in order to become their «patriarch». A committed supporter of Theodore Angelos and a gifted canonist and theologian, Chomatianos captured the admiration of his ruler thus displacing in the leadership of the Church the aged Apocaucos. Under his leadership, the clergy of Epiros adopted a stronger stand towards the demands of the patriarch. Now, besides their anointed ruler the Epirotes had found in Chomatianos a spiritual leader comparable to the patriarch. In the past, they were humbly seeking the permission of the patriarch to ratify their ordinations patiently waiting for his deliberation. Now, they had decided to act without his consent prepared to defend themselves and their territorial integrity

against his attacks. In addition, they were meeting him as equals and in a way even better prepared with a ready arsenal of arguments.

Theodore, they would argue, rose to power with the unanimous consent of the army, the clergy and the senate. His proclamation then was constitutionally sound. The East was the sphere of influence of the Lascarids. Theirs was the West. The clergy rallied around Theodore because he was divinely appointed. To insist in unifying the Church administratively while politically they were divided was both unrealistic and out of the question. However, they were willing to admit that this was a temporary arrangement. And they were correct.

Within a short time the kingdom of Theodore Angelos began to crumble especially after his disastrous defeat in the battle of Klocotnica (1230). Deprived of their emperor, the driving force behind their demands for ecclesiastical independence, the Epirote clergy soon lost its battle against the patriarchate succumbing to the demands of Germanos II.

CHAPTER V

THE HEALING OF THE SCHISM

After Theodore Angelos' disastrous defeat at Klocotnica (March 9, 1230), Epiros became a vassal state of the rising Bulgarian Kingdom, never again to rise to its former power¹. Byzantine historians with a declared pro-Nicene bias interpreted Theodore's defeat and Epiros' subsequent decline as a divine punishment for Theodore's unjust policies towards the legitimate rulers of Nicaea². Permanently removed from power, Theodore was succeeded in Thessalonica, with Asen's approval, by his brother Manuel Angelos who rose to the throne without ever officially assuming the imperial title (April-May 1230)³. Shortly after his accession to power, Manuel entered into negotiations with Vatatzes and Patriarch Germanos II compromising his claims to the *imperium* and Epiros' ecclesiastical independence from the Patriarchate at Nicaea. Lacking, however, real bargaining power, he was finally convinced to renounce his rights to the throne in return receiving from Vatatzes as a compensation the recognition of his title of despot.

With Manuel's renouncement of the *imperium*, the unity of of the Empire was once more politically and spiritually restored. John Vatatzes was recognized as the uncontested claimant to the Byzantine throne and the Nicene-based Patriarch was acknowledged by everyone, including the clergy of Epiros, as the undis-

1. Acr. p. 42.11-15; Ostrogorsky, History, *op. cit.*, pp. 436-437; Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

2. Greg., p. 28.11-15: «...τῆς δίκης ὅψε περιελθούσης αὐτὸν ὧν τε τὴν νόμιμον περιεφρόνησε τῶν Ρωμαίων βασιλείαν, βασιλείας ἑαυτῷ περιθεις ὄνομα».

3. Acr. p. 43. 19. Although he was never officially proclaimed to the throne, Manuel retained some exclusive privileges reserved for the emperor alone, like writing in red ink. Because he acted like a king even though he was only a despot (raised to office by his brother Theodore), the Nicene court mockingly applied to Manuel a liturgical verse: «...ὡς εἰς σέ καὶ μᾶλλον ἄρμόσει τὸ εἰς Χριστὸν ψαλτωδούμενον, σέ τὸν βασιλέα καὶ δεσπότην». Acr. p.43.26.

puted spiritual head of all the Christians within the territories of the Empire. The ecclesiastical schism which had for almost a decade divided the unity of the Orthodox Church thus ended but only as a result of Epiros' eclipse from power.

Except for some sporadic references, the history of the restoration of the ecclesiastical unity between the clergies of Epiros and Nicaea has not been hitherto systematically examined, either because the issue was considered unimportant⁴ or because the sources were not yet published⁵.

THE HEALING OF THE SCHISM

Soon after his accession to power, Manuel Angelos was faced with a dilemma: to follow the policies of his suzerain, Asen II or to seek self-determination. However, his state politically and economically was seriously crippled being a sad picture of its glorious past. Radically reduced in size and manpower, henceforth the policies of Epiros were largely determined by Bulgarian interests¹. In addition to its political and economic setbacks, several of its bishoprics had forcibly come under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian see of Tirnovo, among them the Metropolis of Thessalonica². The only way out, Manuel thought, was either to seek the aid of the Pope or to turn to Nicaea. The former, however, was bound to fail from the outset³. The only and last alternative left to Manuel was to turn to Nicaea or to allow his state politically and ecclesiastically gradually to deteriorate.

The initial step towards the reopening of negotiations was actually taken by Nicaea. Perceiving Manuel's precarious position and his need of political and ecclesiastical support, Vatatzes sent to him a delegation (1231), proposing political and ecclesiastical union⁴. Manuel had no other alternative but to accept. Already, several of his bishoprics were under the control of the Bulgarian clergy, including Thessalonica⁵. To check their ex-

4. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

5. Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-293, gave only a cursory account of the healing of the schism. However, his brief account was later rendered obsolete by Ed. Kurtz who published the correspondence of Patriarch Germanos II with Manuel Angelos and Bardanes: Ed. Kurtz, «Christophoros von Ankyra als Exarch des Patriarchen Germanos II», in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* XVI (1907), 120-142. These documents were also published by V. Vasiljevski in the *Journal of the Ministry of Public Instruction*, 328 (1885) 35-56 and 234-238 but they never received due notice until Kurtz republished them in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. Nicol, too, discusses the healing of the schism but only briefly, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-121.

1. Acr. p. 44. 1-4; Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, (Madison, Wisc., 1964), pp. 524-525. Drinov, *op. cit.*, p. 3. n. 1.

2. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 114; Ostrogorsky, *loc. cit.* P. Nikov, «Curkovnata politika na Ivan Asenja II», *Bulgarska Istoricheska Biblioteka*, III (1930), 65ff.

3. In the fall of 1231, Manuel commissioned Bardanes to go to Italy to negotiate with Pope Gregory IX Epiros' ecclesiastical submission to Rome. Bardanes had hardly arrived in Italy when Manuel decided to recall him. Under the pressure of his clergy, Manuel decided instead of union with Rome to enter into negotiations with Nicaea. For the details of Bardanes' mission to Italy and his correspondence with the Roman clergy and the Emperor Frederick II, see the study of Hoeck and Loenertz, *op. cit.*, pp. 121ff and 154ff.

4. Acr. p. 43. 25; p. 32. 13-16.

5. Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

pansion into Epiros and Macedonia, Manuel entered into negotiations with Nicaea, thus compromising the ecclesiastical independence of his state and at the same time forsaking any pretensions he had to the throne. Pressed by the circumstances and the patriarch's urgent messages⁶, Manuel finally decided «to remove the disgrace of the schism which divided Greeks from Greeks»⁷, by acknowledging the jurisdictional prerogatives of the patriarch in his territories. He only asked that his bishops be excused from travelling to Nicaea to have their appointments ratified there by the patriarch. He also insisted that the synod of his state be allowed the right of electing its bishops because the trip to Nicaea from Epiros was long and dangerous. If the patriarch found this proposal unacceptable, perhaps the Nicene hierarchy could ratify their episcopal appointments by sending to Epiros a legate to act as his plenipotentiary⁸.

Patriarch Germanos assumed an uncompromising stand. The dangers are not worth mentioning, he answered, considering that the unity of the Church is still at stake⁹. To continue arguing, it will only prolong the schism. Thus, he decided, with the consent of his synod, to send to Epiros as his plenipotentiary, Christophoros the bishop of Ankyra¹⁰.

In the meantime, under Manuel's auspices, a general synod of the western clergy convened in Thessalonica, at which a letter from the patriarch was read about the union (Summer 1232)¹¹.

6. That Patriarch Germanos II had been constantly pressing Manuel to enter into negotiations with Vatatzes is evinced from Manuel's letter to Germanos II (1232), in Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, III, p. 60: «φθάνει γάρ ἡ σὴ ἀγιότης καὶ νοουθεσίαις ἡμᾶς πατριχαῖς προκαταλαμβάνειν καὶ καθοδηγεῖν πρὸς... τὸν τῆς ἐνώσεως δεσμὸν ταῖς παραινέσεσιν...» Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1254, pp. 60-61.

7. *ibid.*, «ἀφελεῖν τὸ τῆς διαστάσεως ὄνειδος ἐξ ἡμῶν τῶν Ρωμαίων...»; Lagopates, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

8. *ibid.*, p. 61.

9. *ibid.*, pp. 62-63. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1263, pp. 72-74.

10. *ibid.*, p. 64. The election of Christophoros as Patriarchal exarch in Epiros took place in Nicaea on August 6, 1232, (*ibid.*, p. 65), and not on March 6th as Kurtz has suggested, *op. cit.*, p. 123, an error repeated also by Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 119. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1261, pp. 71-72.

11. This letter of Germanos II to the Epirote clergy is now lost but its contents can be surmised from Bardanes' reply. See, Kurtz, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-136 and Hoeck and Loenertz, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-193. Bardanes' letter has been preserved only in a Latin translation by Baronius. For this translation,

The patriarchal message was favorably received and the synod entrusted Bardanes with the task of drafting a reply. Accordingly, Bardanes proceeded to inform the patriarch of their synod's decision concerning the union and the patriarchal message. With praise and thanksgiving, he wrote, they convened in Thessalonica to hear the patriarch's benevolent instructions. His message about the union filled them with great joy and in response they unanimously acknowledged his spiritual superiority, repenting of their past sins and affirmed with him the union by placing themselves under his jurisdiction as his obedient sons¹². The synod also promised to communicate the patriarch's message of union to all those who were absent from the assembly¹³.

The implementation of the union, however, was carried out by Christophoros, the patriarchal exarch. Shortly after his arrival in the West, (1233), Christophoros convened a synod at which he officially announced to the clergy of Macedonia and Epiros the healing of the schism¹⁴. Bardanes did not attend this synod because he was ill¹⁵. However, he wrote to the exarch praising his endeavors towards the union and assuring him of his support¹⁶. He also extended to him an invitation to visit Corfu, «one of the lowliest and most remote of all the bishoprics»¹⁷.

see Ed. Kurtz, «Georgios Bardanes, Metropolit von Kerkyra», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XV (1906), 603. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1255, p. 61.

12. Hoeck and Loenertz, *op. cit.*, p. 192; Kurtz, «Christophoros von Ankyra», *op. cit.*, p. 135: «Cum primum nobis patriarchales lectae fuerunt litterae et omnia in eis contenta a principio usque ad finem toto ut par erat accepimus corde, quatenam lingua muta remansit? Quodnam os ad hymnos gratiarum plenos non erupit?»

13. *ibid.*, p. 193; Kurtz, p. 136. It seems that the synod was not a general one and that there were many absent. As a result, the proclamation of the union was officially ratified by a minority. However, there is every reason to believe that the proclamation of the union went into effect and was eventually accepted by everyone in Macedonia and Epiros.

14. Bardanes in a letter of his to Christophoros briefly alludes to the activities of the exarch in the West. Kurtz, «Christophoros von Ankyra», *op. cit.*, p. 139.

15. *ibid.*

16. *ibid.*, p. 139, 140.

17. *ibid.*, p. 140: «... ἴσως δὲ καὶ ἡ τῆς ἀγιότητος σου περιωπὴ ἐπὶ τὰ κατώτερα μέρη ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς χθαμαλοὺς ἡμᾶς καταβῇ, τότε πάντως ἔσται καιρὸς ἐμοὶ ἐπιτηδεύματος... καὶ γὰρ ἀπὼν ὡς παρόντα σὲ θεωρῶ...»

For the activities of Bardanes as Metropolitan of Corfu, see also To-

The declaration of the union was also greeted by Manuel Angelos. In a letter of his to Patriarch Germanos II, he acknowledged the spiritual authority of the patriarch promising that «henceforth there is no division but one nation united in its praise to God by the Patriarch whose name will be continually commemorated in their *dyptichs* with words of praise»¹⁸. Manuel also informed Germanos of Christophoros' safe arrival and warm reception¹⁹.

From the outset of the negotiations, Germanos had asked the Epirote synod to provide his exarch with some revenue so he could finance himself during his stay in Epiros. In a letter of his to the Epirote clergy, the patriarch argued that according to the Scriptures²⁰, «thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn»²¹. It is then proper, he said, that his exarch be given what is right and customary in order to support himself during his stay with them. The fact that the Epirote clergy assumed the responsibility of financing Christophoros' days in Epiros attests to the reestablishment of the patriarch's authority over them. This can be also evinced by the fact that the patriarch commissioned his exarch while in Epiros to investigate the status of certain monasteries which claimed *stauropoleion* status²² as Patriarchal foundations²³. Christophoros was instructed to convene a synod and together with the local bishops to determine their true status.

In addition, the patriarch instructed Christophoros to confront the ecclesiastical leadership of Theodore Angelos and call them into account for violating the canons. Thus, Bardanes planned to meet Christophoros although the outcome of their encounter is not known²⁴. Chomatianos was also called into account, among

madakes, «Οἱ λόγιοι τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου», *op. cit.*, pp. 43-52.

18. Kurtz, «Christophoros von Ankyra», *op. cit.*, p. 132.

19. *ibid.*, p. 133.

20. Deuteronomy 25:4. 1 Tim. 5:18.

21. Kurtz, «Christophoros von Ankyra», *op. cit.*, p. 136, 137. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1264, p. 74.

22. See, p. 42 n. 44.

23. Kurtz, «Christophoros von Ankyra», *op. cit.*, pp. 137-139. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1265, p. 75.

24. That Bardanes met with Christophoros is evinced from a letter Bardanes sent to John Grasso of Otranto; Hoeck and Loenertz, *op. cit.* p. 198: «...internuntium et legatum ex Oriente adimus et convenimus...» Bar-

other things for ordaining a bishop to the see of Servion, a bishopric which was normally under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Thessalonica. Chomatianos appealed to the patriarch arguing that the see of Servion had lost its leadership during the Latin occupation²⁵. When it was again liberated the neighboring archbishops were hesitant to ordain a bishop because territorially the Church of Servion was not under their jurisdiction. Considering the needs of this diocese and the suffering it had endured, Chomatianos had decided, to ordain its bishop. «I ordained him», Chomatianos declared «and therefore I alone stand responsible before God whom I call as my witness that I am not an innovator...»²⁶. The Church Fathers as well as the canons show that under special circumstances it is permissible to deviate from the prescribed tradition²⁷. To show that the situation in the East was no better than theirs (in the West), he bitterly added:

Those institutions which once beautified Byzantium so as to be called the most splendid of the cities — the kingship and the priesthood — alas, now ornate the capital of Bithynia [Nicaea] and the once glorious Byzantine now suffers to see his former splendor be claimed by the lowly Bithynian. If these injustices cannot be censured, then I believe that ours should also be spared.²⁸

The outcome of Chomatianos' case is unknown.

danes was actually invited by Manuel Angelos to come to Epiros to meet with Christophoros; «Quoniam igitur responsivis litteris Comneni...», *ibid.*

25. Pitra, *Analecta*, *op. cit.*, cols. 577-588. Meliarakes, *op. cit.*, p. 217 dated this letter of Chomatianos before the healing of the schism. On the other hand, Nicol, *op. cit.* p. 121, n. 19, briefly mentions that Chomatianos sent a letter to Germanos II concerning the ordination of the bishop of Servion but instead of citing the text of Chomatianos' letter in his citation, p. 126, n. 19, he gives cols. 501-504, containing a letter of Chomatianos to Manuel Angelos on «the problem of second marriage and the children begotten thereof».

26. Pitra, *op. cit.*, col 588: «...ἐντεῦθεν λοιπὸν οὐτε ἐγὼ νεωπεριστῆς ἀν κριθείη καὶ ἐφοδοποιδς... οὐτε μὴν ἡ ὑποβαλλομένη με σύνοδος ἐγκληθείη ἀν κίνημα, χειρὸς μὲν ἀνθέκαστον, ποδὸς δὲ ὑπερβάθμων, ἀρπάσαι ἀλλότριον δίκαιον καὶ ἀρμόζον ἐτέρα ἐπαρχία προνομεῦσαι προνόμιον».

27. *ibid.* cols. 581; 587-588.

28. *ibid.*, col. 588.

Apocaukos, the last of the Epirote triad, entered a monastery in Kozyle waiting also the day of his encounter with Christophoros²⁹. In a letter of his to the bishop of Ioanninon, Apocaukos begged the bishop to intervene with the exarch on his behalf³⁰. His agony was mounting as he was expecting the day he was to be brought before the exarch:

I survive in Kozyle, [he wrote] but
I am bedridden receiving threatening
messages and abusing letters from the
exarch. Yet I disregard them because
I believe in justice... but I do
hope that you can intervene on my
behalf because I hear that you are
his friend³¹.

From his retreat, Apocaukos also wrote to George Choniates, his successor to the see of Naupactos about his poverty and illness and how he was deserted by people whom he had considered all along his friends³². Disgraced and left without support, Apocaukos ended his days in Kozyle, believing that eventually his actions would be justified.

Henceforth, relations between Nicaea and Epiros were normal. Nicephoros Blemmydes, who travelled in several places in Greece (1238 - 1239), searching for manuscripts, visited Epiros as a guest of Michael II, the ruler who had succeeded Manuel³³. After his return to Nicaea, Blemmydes wrote to thank Michael II and his wife Theodora for their hospitality³⁴. The fact that Blemmydes travelled freely in Epiros carrying with him letters of recommendation from Vatatzes indicates that the relations between the two states, politically and ecclesiastically were quite normal. Blemmydes during his visit in Epiros, said, that Michael II offered him the vacant see of Achrida but he had to decline the offer obeying Vatatzes' order to return fast to Nicaea³⁵. If

29. Kurtz, «Christophoros von Ankyra», *op. cit.*, p. 140.

30. *ibid.*

31. *ibid.*

32. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, «Ἀθηναϊκὰ ἐκ τοῦ 13' καὶ 14' αἰῶνος», *Ἀρχαία*, III (1902), p. 289. Cf. Laurent, *Les Regestes*, No. 1266, pp. 75-76.

33. Blemmydes, *Curriculum*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

34. J. B. Bury, «Inedita Nicephori Blemmydae», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* VI (1897), 526-537, esp. 528.

35. Blemmydes, *Curriculum*, *op. cit.* pp. 36-37.

the Epirotes were willing to offer Achrida, their most important ecclesiastical center, to a Nicene cleric, it is obvious that they had considered the schism with Nicaea healed.

CONCLUSION

Theodore's efforts at establishing an autonomous Church in Epiros were only a part of his grandiose plan to become the liberator of Constantinople and possessor of the Byzantine throne. That this was his real goal could have hardly escaped the notice of his ecclesiastics who hoped that he would free Constantinople and restore the Empire. As a result, they were prepared to risk a schism with the Nicene-based Patriarchate hoping that it would only be a temporary matter. But their commitment and support towards their ruler's policies was prompted by another consideration. There was no bond or feeling of allegiance that could unite them with the patriarch — except of their common faith and heritage. Their loyalties, however, were different from his and that was very important in their relations. This consideration alone had actually convinced them that they were entitled to a certain degree of ecclesiastical autonomy.

But whereas for the ecclesiastics of Epiros, jurisdictional autonomy from the Nicene-based Patriarchate meant freedom to choose their own bishops, for Theodore Angelos it meant a step towards the creation of an independent state free of the politico-religious influence of Nicaea.

On their part, the Epirote clergy sought to justify their ecclesiastical policies within the precepts of the canons of the Church by appealing to the principle of *economia* which allowed some laxity in the observance of the canons when the circumstances made it necessary. And indeed, the western hierarchs had made a good case for their defense. Since Nicaea and Epiros were politically independent of each other, the Church, they argued, had no other alternative but to adapt itself to the prevailing circumstances by following their rulers' policies. Since they had approved the policies of Theodore Angelos, acknowledging his authority, the Epirote clergy asked the patriarch to grant them the privilege of appointing to their bishoprics their own ecclesiastics and the right to conduct their affairs according to their own discretion.

For the patriarch, however, these demands were quite unacceptable because they violated both his jurisdictional prerogatives and the teachings of the canons of the Church. Besides, the patriarch considered the rulers of Epiros as mere upstarts who had defied his authority and that of the Lascarids.

Since they could not find an acceptable solution, the clergies of the two states were faced with the dilemma of either supporting the policies of their respective rulers, thus heading towards a schism, or keeping aloof of politics. The first alternative, however, seemed more pragmatic than the latter. Considering that the Church was intimately linked with the State and given the circumstances that had followed the fall of 1204, the clergies of the two states did what was actually expected of them: they supported the policies of their rulers whom they believed to be divinely-appointed to rule over them.

Despite the fact that they were prepared to encounter the worse, the Epirotes, throughout their conflict with Nicaea, were placed in the defensive. Their policies were summarily condemned and no outside support was ever given to them. Even when Theodore Angelos was proclaimed to the throne, there were people like Constantine Mesopotamites, the Metropolitan of Thessalonica, who condemned their actions.

On the contrary, the Nicene State enjoyed greater prestige than Epiros and this because its founder, Theodore Lascaris, had been unanimously acclaimed as the legitimate heir to the Byzantine throne. His proclamation and coronation was acclaimed not only in Nicaea but even by the Greeks of many Latin-controlled territories. In addition, Theodore had made his capital the temporary residence of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch whose spiritual authority was acknowledged everywhere, even by the Epirotes themselves. Thus, Nicaea could boast that it had preserved the Byzantine court with its century-long traditions and above all the spiritual leadership of the Church — the patriarch and his synod.

On the other hand, the cause of the Angeloi was considerably weakened by the fact that they lacked the support of the patriarch. Whereas, Theodore Lascaris was crowned by the patriarch, Theodore Angelos had to be crowned by an ecclesiastic of lesser rank, the autocephalous Archbishop of Achrida. To be sure, his lineage was of nobler stock than that of Lascaris and

this was greatly emphasized by his supporters. Yet, his claims to the *imperium* suffered a serious setback because they were condemned by the patriarch whom Theodore Angelos had insulted through his ecclesiastical policies.

The only way then by which Theodore could have changed the attitude of the patriarch and of those who had not committed themselves to his cause was to materialize everyone's dream: to liberate Constantinople and restore the see of the Empire.

In fact, it was because of this consideration that his clergy risked the schism with Nicaea believing that Theodore Angelos was destined to become *basileus* and *autocrator* of the Greeks. However, when this proved a mere illusion, they readily abandoned their religious policies succumbing to the demands of the patriarch never to question his spiritual or jurisdictional authority again.

SUMMARY

*As a result of the political disintegration that followed the fall of Constantinople (1204), the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church in Nicaea and Epiros was involved into an ecclesiastical controversy which reflected the political antagonism of its secular leadership. Its involvement in this dispute was inevitable as the issues at stake concerned the claims of their respective rulers to the *imperium* and to the jurisdictional authority of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch whose see was then temporarily transferred to Nicaea.*

Whereas most Byzantine historians have overlooked the Nicene-Epirote ecclesiastical conflict, (with the single exception of Acropolites who only sporadically mentions it), the Epirote and Nicene prelates engaged in an extensive correspondence which is the only record preserved of the Nicene-Epirote encounter. A primary objective of this study then is to present and systematically to examine the correspondence of these ecclesiastics, (John Apocaukos, Demetrios Chomatianos and George Bardanes of Epiros and Manuel Sarantenos and Germanos II of Nicaea), within the content of the imperial power rivalry of the Angeloi of Epiros and the Lascarids of Nicaea.

To assert Epiros' independence from the Lascarids and in order to challenge their claims to power, Theodore Angelos of Epiros initiated a policy of ecclesiastical self-determination. Thus, his clergy would not acknowledge any longer the jurisdictional authority of the Patriarch or for that matter his episcopal appointments for Epiros. Theodore's policy was accepted by his clergy which sought to justify it to the Patriarch by recounting the anomalous circumstances which had followed the fall of the Empire. The Patriarch, however, considered this policy as an act of rebellion against his authority and warned the Epirotes that their actions were contrary to the canons.

By opposing the jurisdictional authority of the Patriarch, Th. Angelos and his clergy were not only questioning the Patriarch's authority but were also challenging the rights to the throne of the Lascarids under whose patronage the Patriarch functioned. According to

their reasoning, if they had acknowledged the Patriarch's authority it would have meant that they were also acknowledging the Lascarids as the heirs to the Byzantine throne. But since Th. Angelos had also designs for the imperium it was imperative to establish his state as both politically and ecclesiastically independent. Of course, his clergy knew that his ecclesiastical policies would inevitably create a schism with Nicaea. But they also believed that ecclesiastical autonomy was a necessary concomitant of their ruler's policies.

With Theodore's anointment and coronation in Thessalonica, the schism between the clergies of Nicaea and Epiros became final. Fortunately for the unity of the Orthodox Church this schism lasted only a decade. In fact, after the defeat of Th. Angelos at Klocotnica (1230), his kingdom rapidly declined and with it also his plans for an autonomous Epirote Church. Permanently reduced to servitude, Epiros was forced to acknowledge once again the sovereignty of the Lascarids along with the spiritual and jurisdictional authority of the Patriarch.

APPENDIX

Record of Cited Letters

Date			Source
1.	1219	Patriarch Manuel I to Apocaucos	V V n 14
2.	1219	Apocaucos to Patriarch Manuel I	V V n 15
3.	1219	Synodicon for Bardanes' election	V V n° 13
4.	1222	Patriarch Manuel I to Apocaucos —response to V V n° 13—	V V n° 16
5.	1222	Apocaucos to Patriarch Manuel I	V V n° 17
6.	1225	Synodicon for Theodore Angelos' imperial proclamation	V V n° 24
7.	1225-26	Pittakion to Patriarch Germanos II —composed by Apocaucos—	V V n° 26
8.	1225-26	Chomatianos to Patriarch Germanos II	Pitra cap. 112
9.	1225-26	Apocaucos to Patriarch Germanos II —mentioned in V V n° 27—	Text lost
10.	1226-27	Patriarch Germanos II to Epirote clergy —mentioned in Pitra cap. 113 and Loenertz EEBΣ 104-118. Response to V V n° 26.	Text lost
11.	1226-27	Patriarch Germanos II to Chomatianos —response to Pitra cap. 112—	Pitra cap. 113
12.	1226-27	Epirote bishops to Patriarch Germanos II —composed by Bardanes—	Loenertz EEBΣ 104-118
13.	1226-27	Chomatianos to Patriarch Germanos II —response to Pitra cap. 113—	Pitra cap. 114
14.	1226-27	Apocaucos to Patriarch Germanos II	V V n° 27

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15. 1232	Patriarch Germanos II to Despot Manuel Doucas —mentioned in M M III, cap. XIII, 59-62.	Text lost
16. 1232	Despot Manuel Doucas to Patriarch Germanos II	M M III, cap. XIII
17. 1232	Patriarch Germanos II to Despot Manuel Doucas	M M III, cap. XIV
18. 1232	Commission of Christophoros bishop of Ankyra as patriarchal Exarch	M M III, cap. XV
19. 1232	Patriarch Germanos II to Epirote clergy —message of Union. Mentioned in Kurtz BZ 134-136 and Hoeck - Loenertz 191-193.	Text lost
20. 1233	Despot Manuel Doucas to Patriarch Germanos II	Kurtz BZ 131-134
21. 1233	Synodal letter to Patriarch Germanos II —written by Bardanes—	Kurtz BZ 134-136 Hoeck - Loenertz 191-193
22. 1233	Patriarch Germanos II to Epirote clergy about the financial support of the Exarch Christophoros	Kurtz BZ 136-137
23. 1233	Patriarch Germanos II to Epirote clergy about patriarchal foundations in the West	Kurtz BZ 137-139
24. 1233	Bardanes to Exarch Christophoros	Kurtz BZ 139-140
25. 1233	Chomatianos to Patriarch Germanos II	Pitra cap. 140
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